

a person can quote the *Gita* or the *Upanishads*, and can also display a life of simplicity in dress or in food or in manners, the whole country will begin to worship him as Lord Krishna or Gautama Buddha or some such incarnation of divinity. It is no fault of Mahatma Gandhi if his countrymen are enamoured of his loin cloth or of his frugal meals or of his professions of truth or even of his frank confessions.

Of course, Mahatma Gandhi was not in his younger days what he is now. When he was in England he was a pucca shahib. We know how he ran to the Army and Navy Stores for a suit of clothes the moment he stepped into London, how he purchased a black silk hat for nineteen shillings and an evening dress-suit for ten pounds from Bond Street. He did not feel satisfied with that equipment. He sent an urgent message to his brother in India for despatching a double watch-chain of gold. He used to spend a lot of time before the mirror for putting on a tie and brushing his coarse, tough and unmanageable hair. A nineteen-shilling top hat was the crowning touch to all his aesthetic ambitions. But then, to be a pucca Englishman he needed a little bit of music and dance. He spent three pounds for a set of dancing lessons but unfortunately he could never follow the piano or keep time. He spent a few pounds more on a violin and a violin teacher. He also discovered that with the regulation of his ear and steps he must learn correct English pronunciation for which he had to purchase a copy of Bell's "*Standard Elocutionist*."

These accomplishments unfortunately were of no service to him either in India or in South Africa. Rather

Zulu convict. He once took a vow not to take cow's milk because cows were being ill-treated, but when once he fell seriously ill, his wife suggested most ingenuously that goat's milk could not be a prohibition to him because it was not cow's milk. The vow was, therefore, kept by replacing one milk for the other. Some people talk about his fasts which Mahatma Gandhi observes so religiously whenever there is an occasion for making amends for his Himalayan blunders. These fasts, his votaries declare, do Mahatma Gandhi an incalculable good, particularly, to his over-strung nerves, caused either by the Government's stern attitude or by the people's sickleness, and also to his delicate conscience that feels guilty at the slightest failure of his political or other schemes. Fasting is in the very blood of the Indians. If you go to villages, you will find even these days there is not a single family where some woman or other—married, virgin, widow—who does not fast for some days in the month either for health or for religious duty or for some material blessing just as the individual mind believes in its efficacy. Sometimes even elderly men are found to observe fasts and the little children no less taking an active delight in such an observance. Of course, in the case of Mahatma Gandhi, fasts are public affairs and are intended to secure trust, sympathy, unity, discipline from the people, who sometimes forget the spiritual significance of his personal sacrifice for the public cause.

Most of the critics of Mahatma Gandhi accuse him, not of insincerity or faithlessness nor of any lack of earnestness or zeal, not even of any lukewarm patriotism,



Jawahar Lal Nehru saw at once that the Delhi Pact was a most effective barrier to the realisation of a peasants' republic. Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel—the actual President of the Congress—seems to have been the first to detect the fact that it was Lord Irwin and not Mr. Gandhi who won all the major advantages. Moreover, events were soon to show that Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel did not stand in isolation. Prisoners recruited from the upper classes were often only too anxious to return to the comforts of their own houses. Yet even among them there were many who said that, since the only result of the Civil Disobedience movement was a Pact highly advantageous to the Viceroy, their sufferings had been endured in vain. There were thousands of volunteers whom Congress had paid for their agitations and who, as a result of their Pact, were now thrown into unemployment. Intellectual youngmen referred apologetically to the Mahatma as a poor old gentleman." His prestige was still more lowered in the eyes of the Congress by his failure at the Round Table Conference. When he returned from London, he found the whole city of Bombay seething with excitement and felt that for all practical purposes the Delhi Pact was broken, because the Government of India has already arrested Abdul Gaffar Khan, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and Mr. Sherwani. He found nothing less than five ordinances already in force, which he humorously described as "Christmas presents from Lord Willingdon." He wanted to have an interview with the Viceroy but the Congress Working Committee reminded him that such an interview might result again in a

in South Africa he suffered a lot of personal humiliation and physical injury on account of his top-hat and frock coat. If he were to continue the same hobby in dress on his return to India from South Africa, it is doubtful if his countrymen would have ever taken notice of him except with eyes of hatred and contempt. Though dress and manners do not count in ordinary life yet they seriously matter in the case of leaders in political, social or other spheres. If an Archbishop were to deliver the best sermons in the world without his holy robes, if an Indian Congressman were to address most eloquently a public meeting in any other garment but of home-spun khaddar, if a military General were to lead his campaign in an unimposing civil suit, would the world care to listen to him or even take any notice of him ? Mahatma Gandhi like other leaders of the world knew the weakness of the mob, of the common multitude, and that is why, he changed his clothes according to the popular fancy. In India the loin cloth has been the badge of all tribes—from the most intellectual brahmins down to the unlettered peasants. Cow's and goat's milk and common vegetables have been the food of the millions. People say that Mahatma Gandhi took to the loin cloth because he wanted to identify himself with the *ryots*, because the ryots form the miserable millions of the population of his country. They say also that he keeps his chest bare because the untouchables are not permitted to wear the sacred thread. But then in England he wore the frock coat and the top hat while in South Africa he wore the Sergeant-Major's uniform and also the arrowed shirt of a

THE  
LOINCLOTH LAID BARE

BY  
PROF. T. K. DUTT, M.A.

PUBLISHED BY  
INDIAN PRINTING WORKS  
KACHERI ROAD - - - LAHORE

*1st Edition, 1912*

*2nd Edition, 1913*

but of a queer inherent spirit of contradiction and indecision which makes him often appear as an enigma even in the eyes of his blind idolators. He has been variously branded as a Moslem Gandhi, a British Gandhi and a Hindu Gandhi. Mark how he talks with the greatest zeal as the staunchest champion of British citizenship and the British empire, "Our existence in South Africa is only in our capacity as British subjects. In every memorial, we have presented, we have asserted our rights as such. We have been proud of our British citizenship or have given our rulers and the world to believe that we are proud. Our rulers profess to safeguard our rights because we are British subjects, and what little rights we still retain, we retain because we are British subjects. It would be unbecoming to our dignity as a nation to look on with folded hands at a time when ruin stared the British in the face as well as ourselves simply because they ill-treat us here. And such criminal inaction could only aggravate our difficulties. If we desire to win freedom and achieve our welfare as members of the British empire, here is a golden opportunity for us to do so by helping the British in the war by all means at our disposal. It must largely be conceded that justice is on the side of the Boers, but so long as the subjects own allegiance to a State, it is their clear duty generally to accommodate themselves, and to accord their support to acts of the State." These words clearly show that the apostle of non-co-operation in India was the greatest apostle of co-operation in South Africa. He was not a co-operator in mere words but in deeds also. He organised a volunteer corps of non-combatants for the

# Preface

## A WORD TO MY COUNTRYMEN

This little book is neither a defence of Mahatma Gandhi nor an attack on him. I am neither a congressman nor a 'toady,' and I hate to be a communalist. When I read the book '*Gandhi-Muslim conspiracy*' by a Hindu nationalist, I felt a loathing sensation. One who poses to be a Hindu and at the same time a nationalist is none of the two but only a rank communalist. I have quoted in this little book of mine a few paragraphs from the preface of the loathsome book only to show to what length one can blacken a fair name in the name of facts or fiction, without understanding even a grain of the great personality whom he has ambitiously undertaken to paint. I have also quoted one chapter from another book '*War without Violence*' by Krishnalal Shridharani to show the reverse of the picture in which the writer has tried to paint Mahatma Gandhi as the tenth *Avatar*—which is as foolish as the other is wicked. Then again, I have quoted occasionally from a third book "*Tragedy of Gandhi*" by Glorney Bolton, who has deliberately tried to caricature the greatest man of our country but paying due regards to the great personality. The same English writer says at the end of his book, "Time will enable us

stretcher work, and it was accepted by the Government. Gandhi the future arch-priest of pacifism became the Sergeant-Major of the Indian Ambulance Corps. General Buller mentioned Gandhi and his co-workers in dispatches and when the war was over, he and thirty six other Indians received war medals.

Then again, on the eve of the Great War, Gandhi declared most religiously, "It is my knowledge—right or wrong—of the British constitution which binds me to the Empire. Tear that constitution to shreds, and my loyalty also will be torn to shreds. Keep that constitution in tact, and you will hold me bound—a slave to that constitution." In the same strain he talked at the commencement of the Boer War, "We were slaves and they were masters. How could a slave co-operate with the master in the hour of the latter's need? Was it not the duty of the slave, seeking to be free, to make the master's need his opportunity? This argument failed to appeal to me then. I knew the difference of status between an Englishman and an Indian, but I did not believe that we had been quite reduced to slavery. I felt then that it was more the fault of individual British officials than of the British system, and that we could convert them by love. If we would improve our status through the help and co-operation of the British, it was our duty to win their help by standing by them in their hour of need. The opposing friends felt that this was the hour for making a bold declaration of the Indian demands and for improving the Indian's status. I thought that England's need should not be turned into

to see the triumphs and blunders of Gandhi in a gentler light. He has harboured no enmity against us. Posterity will certainly number him among the friends of England. One day we shall raise a statue to his memory, as we have raised statues to the memory of Washington and Lincoln, and to the memory of others whose universal spirit transcended the conditions of their time." Such words make sufficient amends for the caricature. But the concluding words in the book "*Gandhi-Muslim Conspiracy*"--"Falschood, thy name is Gandhi."—are the most unkindest cut of all and betray only a lamentable lack of human taste, culture, decency, and understanding.

I have also quoted a few words from some articles to newspapers by Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar, who professes to be a staunch Congressman and is in fact President of the All-India Forward Bloc but who unfortunately has totally misrepresented Mahatma Gandhi for reasons best known to him. The words of Subhas Chandra Bose in his well-known book '*Indian Struggle*' have also been quoted here along with the words of the obscure souls. Though Subhas has been more sinned against than sinning by his own Guru yet I must confess that the young revolutionary is but a child to the great political prophet, and if he has been sinned, it is due to his own incorrigible spirit of unrest, haste and impatience, and not due to any of the conscious crimes of his Guru.

In every country great men have been abused and extolled in one and the same breath ; and it is no wonder that Mahatma Gandhi should have his idolators as well as his critics. Those who differ with him in mere ideology

our opportunity, and that it was more becoming and far-sighted not to press our demands while the war lasted."

During the last Great War when Lord Chelmsford invited Mahatma Gandhi to attend a War Conference at Delhi, he accepted the invitation and attended the conference inspite of his own moral doubts and those of Mr. C.F. Andrews. He went to the length of supporting a resolution for intensive recruiting and actually toured Kaira addressing the peasants, who further embarrassed him by putting the question, "You are a votary of *Ahimsa*; how can you ask us to take up arms?" Then again, when he came to the Punjab to make the Congress inquiry about the tragedy at Jalianwalla Bagh, he publicly proclaimed that General Dyer was a brave man and that not a single statement in the report had ever been disproved. This proclamation was of course a demonstration of the ethics of his *Satyagraha*, which means firmness in the love of truth. When the Montague-Chelmsford reforms had passed smoothly through all the Parliamentary stages and the King's Proclamation had just been published, Mr. Tilak and Mr. Das were going to move in the Indian Congress a resolution rejecting the reforms. But Mahatma Gandhi was so much impressed by the Proclamation that he said on the occasion, "The Royal Proclamation is full of good will, and it would be wrong for Congress not to have responded to the King's call for co-operation. We shall lose nothing by beginning with co-operation and shall at once place the bureaucracy in the wrong." In 1920 Mahatma Gandhi attended the Moslem Conference

are normal creatures, but those who question his honesty of purpose or sincerity of action are positively mean and malicious, and as such, are fit to rank with the enemies of our country. I cannot imagine how the Moslem League or the Hindu Mahasabha can afford to regard Mahatma Gandhi in the light as it is wont to do, knowing full well that he is the greatest friend of India as an indivisible country or as one nation, how we can ever find an excuse to suspect unfriendliness behind any of his political or social activities, how we can put up another banner and form another camp waging war against the common cause of freedom to which he has dedicated his life along with millions of other patriotic souls.

It is one of the grossest errors of human understanding to fancy that Mahatma Gandhi is a god or an Avtar or that he is infallible in all his words and actions. Even much greater and nobler souls, whom the world worships today as saviours or prophets, were as human and fallible as ourselves. There is no harm in accepting Mahatma Gandhi as a great social reformer or as a noble moral teacher or even as a remarkable political thinker, but to believe in his sacred touch as a cure of any moral or physical infirmity, to accept every syllable of his guarded or unguarded words as a gospel truth, to regard every one of his political gestures as the surest step to freedom, is indeed the height of human folly or of intellectual perversion. The idea of this little book is merely to guard against that weakness. I have studied Mahatma Gandhi and his career, not as an Englishman, or a Hindu or a Moslem or a Christian but as an Indian. Though it has not been my privilege to come in direct touch with the great soul yet

at Allahabad where the Mohammadans of India ratified his resolution for a campaign of non-co operation but he hesitated and wrote to the Viceroy, "The only course open to me is either in despise to sever all connections with British rule, or, if I still retain faith in the inherent superiority of the British Constitution, to adopt such means as will rectify the wrong done, and thus restore confidence I have not lost faith in the superiority of the British Constitution, and it is because I believe in it, that I have advised my Moslem friends to withdraw their support from Your Excellency's Government, and advised the Hindus to join them" This letter probably is one of the greatest riddles in the world as it places Gandhi at once neither within nor outside the confidence of the Hindus or the Moslems or the Britishers Glorney Bolton gives probably the most correct analysis of Mahatma Gandhi's mind and character when he says, "Again and again he had publicly professed to be among the staunchest supporters of the British Empire Stretcher-bearer, Sergeant Major, recruiting officer—he had borne all these distinctions bravely Only a few months before, he had declined even to consider the Montague Chelmsford reforms as disappointing Now, he was advocating *Swaraj*, which meant the exclusion of Englishmen as a political power Was it to so great an extent as this that the Government of India represented 'the activity of Satan' Where was the logic in the attitude of a man who openly admired the Royal Proclamation and expressed himself ready to work the Montague Chelmsford reforms? A woman might plead that she

I would not say like those blind millions, who have said and are saying still, that Mahatma Gandhi is not a human being but a god nor would I ungraciously hint like many of the mean and malicious souls that he is a friend only of the Hindus or of the Moslems or of the Britishers. If Mahatma Gandhi is a friend to any, he is a friend only to the true Indian and a sworn enemy to those who want to divide India into races or communities, sects or parties, dominions or principalities. If he has any fault, he has all the faults of his countrymen, and if he has any virtue, he has all the virtues of the greatest man of the world. Those who judge him by his words are fools, and those who misjudge him by his actions are no better.

The title of this little book requires some comment. The 'loin cloth' stands only for one man in India, and that man is Mahatma Gandhi. I have undertaken to 'lay bare' the 'loin cloth' not only with my pen but also with the pen of others, with a view to reveal to my countrymen that Mahatma Gandhi is neither a devil nor a god but only a human soul. He is not even a superman or a monster as some of the critics have painted him. The loin cloth is but his badge—the badge of Indian poverty, Indian suffering, Indian bondage, but not the badge of Indian divinity or Indian spiritualism. If we are to do justice to the man and his noble cause, we must 'lay bare' the badge, and that is what I have done—I have revealed the reality behind the loincloth.

was trusting her intuition rather than her reasoning faculties. She might feel that England was insincere. A biographer might find in Mr. Gandhi's antecedents the preparation for a final attitude of mistrust ; but even this discovery does not provide an exhaustive explanation. There lurked the need for power. Once again, we see the resemblance to Manning. Manning renounced everything—except power. Yet that power, which he so eagerly coveted, made him afraid. He refused the post of Sub-Almoner—an office that once led Randall Davidson to the Archbishopric of Canterbury. He struggled with tortuous diplomacy to gain the Archbishopric of Westminster, but when the chance came for him to compete—however unsuccessfully—for the Papal tiara, he turned aside. If Mr. Gandhi did not love power, atleast he needed it. The mere holding of high office has not impressed him. He has cheerfully watched the election of smaller men to the Presidency of the Indian National Congress ; but to accept a position from which he could not impose his own political ethics and his own weapons of moral warfare would be to betray the light within him. When he expressed satisfaction at the Montague-Chelmsford reforms—and they were far more revolutionary than either British or Indian opinion realised at the time—he was numbering himself among the conservatives. He would have become not merely a right-wing figure, but a leader of the past. It was not to be borne ; and Mr. Gandhi accepted at last the responsibilities of a full-fledged politician."

The same Gandhi who posed to be a friend to the British Government called upon his followers on the 1st

## CHAPTER I

"Gandhi the ascetic, Gandhi the moralist and social reformer, Gandhi the politician set loose forces stronger than himself. He has not fashioned life according to his own pattern."—*Glorney Bolton.*

WHEN one thinks of the career of Mahatma Gandhi one is tempted to recall the reflections of John Masefield on William Shakespeare who says, "Macbeth is the tragedy of a man betrayed by an obsession. Caesar is betrayed by an obsession of the desire of glory, Antony by passion, Tarquin by lust, Wolsey by worldly greed, Coriolanus and Timon by their nobleness, Angelo by his righteousness, Hamlet by his wisdom. All fail through having some hunger or quality in excess. Macbeth fails because he interprets with his worldly mind things spiritually suggested to him. God sends on many men strong delusion, that they shall believe a lie. Othello is one such. Many things betray men. One strong means of delusion is the half-true, half-wise, half-spiritual thing, so much harder to kill than the lie direct. The sentimental treacherous things, like women, who betray by arousing pity, are the dangerous things because their attack is made in the guise of great things. Tears look like grief; sentiment looks like love; love feels like nobility; spiritualism seems like revelation."

of August 1920 to give up all titles of honour, to refrain from subscribing to Government loans, to discontinue legal practice, to arbitrate and not to litigate, to boycott the Legislative Councils and all Government schools and colleges, to remain at an arm's length from official functions, to decline all offers of office from the Government, and above all, to preach and practise the gospel of *Swadeshi*: Simultaneously he wrote a letter to the Viceroy in which he said, "It is not without a pang that I return the Kaisar-i-Hind Gold Medal granted to me by your predecessor for my humanitarian work in South Africa, the Zulu War Medal, granted in South Africa for my services as officer in charge of the Indian Volunteer Ambulance Corps in 1906, and the Boer War Medal for my services as assistant superintendent of the Indian Volunteer Stretcher-bearer Corps during the Boer War of 1899-1900. I can retain neither respect nor affection for a government which has been moving from wrong to wrong in order to defend its immorality. The Government must be moved to repentance." Then again, he said while explaining away his support of the Montague-Chelmsford reforms, "The issue is whether *Swaraj* has to be gained through the new Councils or without the Councils. Knowing the British Government to be utterly unrepentant, how can we believe that the new councils will lead to *Swaraj*?"

Mahatma Gandhi's Civil Disobedience movement led to various riots and disturbances in unsuspected corners of the country. The Akalis became satyagrahis against the Mohants, and afterwards Satyagrahis against the

Mahatma Gandhi like William Shakespeare has provoked critics all over the world, who unfortunately sometimes aspire to claim superiority of judgment, understanding, foresight, reason over their own subject of study, their victim of wrath, malice, jealousy and misconstruction. Some even quarrel with his scholarship, which they say, is not, at all bright or distinguished. They add a further sting that he went to South Africa because he could not find a job in his own country. Others complain that Gandhi who is the apostle of non-violence and satyagraha championed the British cause in the Boer War as well as in the last Great War. Everybody knows that Gandhi is a disciple of Ruskin and Tolstoy and yet everybody wonders why the great disciple has uniformly failed at every political crisis in his own country. The world says that Gandhi is at heart a Tory, and as India is fundamentally a conservative country, it is no wonder that he is worshipped by us as the greatest man of the twentieth century. But wherein truly lies his greatness ? Is that in his asceticism, in his non-violence and renunciation, in his satyagraha and self-sacrifice ? Or is it in his love of truth, freedom and suffering ? Some people have most ungraciously pointed out that Gandhi's greatness lies in the ignorance and superstition, in the religious and spiritual follies of his countrymen. They have even made impious references to his loin cloth, his goat's milk, his fasts and confessions. They say that in India if a person appears in the garb of a fakir or a sanyasi, people will at once bow down before him whether he is in reality a robber or a thief, a swindler or a cheat, a debauch or a kidnapper, and if such

Government, because the Government for good reasons of its own had sided with the Mohants. But the Sikh dispute between Akali and Mohant had nothing to do with Mahatma Gandhi or with his Swaraj. Immediately after the unhappy incident of Chauri-Chaura, Mahatma Gandhi felt himself guilty for what had happened. He asked his Working Committee at Bardoli to withdraw the Civil Disobedience movement with his characteristic apology, "I know that the drastic reversal of practically the whole of the aggressive programme may be politically unsound, but there is no doubt that it is religiously sound. The country will have gained by my humiliation and confession of error. For confession of error is like a broom that sweeps away dirt and leaves the surface cleaner and brighter. I feel stronger for my confession. The tragedy of Chauri-Chaura is really the index-finger. It shows the way India may easily go if drastic precautions be not taken. If we are not to evolve violence out of non-violence, it is quite clear that we must hastily retrace our steps and re-establish an atmosphere of peace, and not think of starting mass Civil Disobedience until we are sure of peace being retained. Let the opponent glory in our humiliation and so-called defeat. It is better to be charged with cowardice than to be guilty of denial of our oath and sin against God." This apology was soon followed by a long penitential fast.

Then again, the Gandhi-Irwin pact created a lot of misunderstanding between Mahatma Gandhi and his followers. Glorney Bolton justly reflects the feelings of the Congress Working Committee when he says, "Pandit

active and useful public life, and his determination to achieve something tangible in the direction of his country's freedom will keep up his spirits. So far as his popularity and reputation are concerned, they will endure till the end of his life—because unlike other political leaders the Mahatma's popularity and reputation do not depend on his political leadership—but largely on his character. The question we have to consider, however, is whether the Mahatma will continue his political activities or whether he will voluntarily withdraw himself from active politics—of which there are indications at the present moment—and devote himself exclusively to social and humanitarian work. A prediction in the case of the Mahatma is a hazardous proposition. Nevertheless, one thing is certain. The Mahatma will not play second fiddle to any one. As long as it will be possible for him to guide the political movement, he will be there—but if the composition or the mentality of the Congress changes, he may possibly retire from active politics. That retirement may be temporary or permanent. A temporary retirement is like a strategic retreat and is not of much significance, because one hero will back into the picture once again. We have had experience of the Mahatma's retirement from active politics one before—from 1924 to 1928. Whether there is a possibility of the Mahatma's permanent retirement depends to some extent at least on the attitude of the British Government. If he is able to achieve something tangible for his country, then his position will be unassailable among his countrymen. Nothing succeeds like success, and the Mahatma's success

Pact, which would be advantageous only to the Government. The attitude of the Working Committee obliged Mahatma Gandhi within twenty four hours of his arrival to send a wire to the Viceroy to the effect—"I was unprepared on landing yesterday to find Frontier and United Provinces Ordinances, shootings in Frontier and arrests of valued comrades in both on the top of the Bengal Ordinances waiting me. I do not know whether I am to regard these as an indication that friendly relations between us are closed, or whether you expect me still to see you and receive guidance from you as to the course I am to pursue in advising the Congress. I would esteem a wire in reply." The same evening Mahatma Gandhi met the members of the Welfare of India League and paid a glowing tribute to Sir Samuel Hoare. His words puzzled and no less angered the Working Committee, while the Englishmen present at the meeting took it that he was on the verge of breaking away from the Working Committee leading to a split in the Congress.

The next day the Viceroy sent his reply to Mahatma Gandhi, "You have yourself been absent from India on the business of the Round Table Conference and, in the light of the attitude which you have observed there, His Excellency is unwilling to believe that you have personally any share in the responsibility for, or that you approve of, the recent activities of the Congress in the United Provinces and in the North-West Frontier Province. If this is so, he is willing to see you and to give you his views as to the way in which you can best exert your influence to maintain the spirit of co-operation

will confirm public faith in his personality and in his weapon of non-violent non-co-operation. But if the British attitude continues to be as uncompromising as it is to-day—public faith in the Mahatma as a political leader and in the method of non-violent non-co-operation will be considerably shaken. In that event they will naturally turn to a more radical leadership and policy.

"In spite of the unparalleled popularity and reputation which the Mahatma has among his countrymen and will continue to have regardless of his future political career—there is no doubt that the unique position of the Mahatma is due to his political leadership. The Mahatma himself distinguishes between his mass-popularity and his political following, and he is never content with having merely the former. . Whether he will be able to retain that political following in the years to come in the event of the British attitude being as unbending as it is to-day, will depend on his ability to evolve a more radical policy. Will he be able to give up the attempt to unite all the elements in the country and boldly identify himself with the more radical forces ? In that case nobody can possibly supplant him. The hero of the present phase of the Indian struggle will then be the hero of the next phase as well. But what does the balance of probability indicate ? The Patna meeting of the All-India Congress Committee in May 1934, affords an interesting study in this connection. The Mahatma averted the Swarajist revolt by advocating council entry himself. But the Swarajists of 1934 are not the dynamic Swarajists of 1922-1923. Therefore, while he was able to win them over,

which animated the proceedings of the Round Table Conference. But His Excellency feels bound to emphasize that he will not be prepared to discuss with you measures which the Government of India, with the full approval of His Majesty's Government, have found it necessary to adopt in Bengal, the United Provinces and the North-West Frontier Province...."

On New Year's Day Mahatma Gandhi sent another telegram to the Viceroy in which he said, "I cannot conceal from His Excellency my opinion that the reply he has condescended to send was hardly a return for my friendly and well-meant approach. And if it is not too late, I would ask His Excellency to reconsider his decision and see me as a friend, without imposing any conditions whatsoever as to the scope or subject of discussion, and I on my part can promise that I would study with an open mind all the facts that he might put before me. I would unhesitatingly and willingly go to the respective Provinces, and with the aid of the authorities, study both sides of the question, and if I came to the conclusion, after such a study, that the people were in the wrong, and that the Working Committee, including myself, were misled as to the correct position, and that the Government was right, I should have no hesitation in making that open confession and guiding the Congress accordingly. The Working Committee has accepted my advice and passed a resolution tentatively sketching a plan of Civil Disobedience. I am sending herewith the text of the resolution. If His Excellency thinks it worthwhile to see me, the operation of the resolution will be suspended during our

he could not avoid alienating the Left-Wingers, many of whom have now combined to form the Congress Socialist Party. At the present moment another challenge to the Mahatma's policy has crystallised within the Congress in the Congress Nationalist Party led by Pandit Malaviya. The dispute has arisen over the Communal award of the Prime Minister, Mr Ramsay MacDonald. One definite prediction can be made at this stage, namely, that the future parties within the Congress will be based on economic issues. It is not improbable that in the event of the Left-Wingers capturing the Congress machinery, there will be a further secession from the Right and the setting up of a new organisation of the Right-Wingers like the Indian Liberal Federation of to-day. It will of course take some years to clarify the economic issues in the public mind so that parties may be organised on the basis of a clear programme and ideology. Till the issues are clarified, Mahatma Gandhi's political supremacy will remain unchallenged, even if there is a temporary retirement as in 1924. But once the clarification takes place, his political following will be greatly affected. As has been already indicated, the Mahatma has endeavoured in the past to hold together all the warring elements—landlord and peasant, capitalist and labour, rich and poor. That has been the secret of his success as surely as it will be the ultimate cause of his failure. If all the warring elements resolve to carry on the struggle for political freedom, the internal social struggle will be postponed for a long time, and men holding the position of the Mahatma will continue to dominate the public life of the country.

discussion, in the hope that it may result in the resolution being finally given up. I admit that the correspondence between His Excellency and myself is of such grave importance as not to brook delay in publication. I am, therefore, sending my telegram, your reply, this rejoinder and the Working Committee's resolution for publication."

The latter portion of the telegram was added under the persuasion of the Working Committee, and it was more than Lord Willingdon was prepared to accept. His Excellency sent his reply, "No Government, consistent with the discharge of its responsibility, can be subject to any condition sought to be imposed under the menace of unlawful action by any political organisation, nor can the Government of India accept the position implied in your telegram that its policy should be dependent on the judgment of yourself as to the necessity of the measures which the Government has taken after the most careful and thorough consideration of the facts and after all possible remedies have been exhausted." Mahatma Gandhi was arrested on the 4th of January and sent to Yervada gaol.

Lord Lothian and members of the special Franchise were already touring India and gathering information for the Cabinet's guidance to reach a communal agreement. On the 11th of March Mahatma Gandhi decided to fast unto death and wrote a letter to Sir Samuel Hoare in which he said, "For me the question of the untouchables is predominantly moral and religious. The political aspect, important though it is, dwindles into insignificance compared to the moral and religious issue. I know that

But that will not be the case. The vested interests, the 'haves' will in future fight shy of the 'have-nots' in the political fight and will gradually incline towards the British Government. The logic of history will therefore follow its inevitable course. The political struggle and the social struggle will have to be conducted simultaneously. The party that will win political freedom for India will be also the party that will win social and economic freedom of the masses. Mahatma Gandhi has rendered and will continue to render phenomenal service to his country. But India's salvation will not be achieved under his leadership."

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta, Ex-Finance Minister, Bombay, has spoken on Mahatma Gandhi in his preface to a book "*Gandhi-Muslim Conspiracy*" by a Hindu Nationalist. We quote below a few paragraphs from that preface.—

"Gandhiji inspite of his absolute sincerity and his undoubted patriotism is the victim of a cruel hallucination, which makes him believe that he is the prophet of a New Age, born to shape erring humanity into the pattern of Truth and Non-violence, that Providence has specially commissioned him to achieve that consummation ; that this unconscious, cruel, but none the less real self-deception results in making the Mahatma an incorrigible egotist and in creating in his heart an irresponsible craving for a domination over men's minds reckless of consequences, and that by this insatiable though unconscious lust for domination, he has brought into existence an absolute stalemate in Indian politics, a

separate electorate is neither a penance nor any remedy for the crushing degradation they have groaned under I, therefore, respectfully inform His Majesty's Government that in the event of their decision creating separate electorate for the depressed classes, I must fast unto death I see no spirit of democracy Indeed my recent visit to England has confirmed my opinion that your democracy is a superficial, circumscribed thing In the weightiest matters, decisions are taken by individuals or groups without any reference to Parliament, and these have been ratified by members having but a vague notion of what they were doing Such was the case with Egypt, the War of 1914, and such is the case with India My whole being rebels against the idea that in a system called democratic one man should have unfettered power of affecting the destiny of an ancient people numbering over three hundred millions, and that his decisions can be enforced by mobilizing the most terrible forces of destruction To me this is a negation of democracy ”

On the 13th of April, Sir Samual Hoare replied to Mahatma Gandhi, “Lord Lothian's Committee has not yet completed its tour, and it must be some weeks before we can receive any conclusions at which it may have arrived We shall not keep the emergency measures in force any longer than we are obliged to for the purpose of maintaining the essentials of law and order and protecting our officials and other classes of the community against terrorist outrages ” On the 17th of August, the Prime Minister announced the Government's decision, which allowed the untouchables to vote in the general constitu-

communal tension in the worst and the most aggravated form, an accentuation of the slave mentality in the masses, a virtual collapse of the intelligentia and a tightening of foreign fetters round India's feet, but with all that he has achieved his object, Gandhiji is to day for millions the Mahatma, a Messiah, a Prophet the Herald of a New Age, and that is what he wanted The Mahatma has brought to bear on his mission a new and characteristic strategy He has been able successfully to conceal his hatred and prejudices against his opponents under the lofty poses of Love, Truth, and Non violence, and by the amazing gentleness of his language towards them This ostentatious deference to his adversaries serves his purpose and often turns the adversary into an ardent admirer But the whole strategy is a mask, unconscious but a mask still The method of defeating the adversary is deadly in its precision And all this is super-imposed by a spectacular austerity of life The result is not in doubt The trick is done the magic tells The adversary is duped and the conjurer carries the day Mr Mohandas Karam Chand Gandhi becomes the Mahatma

"In 1914 after his abortive attempt in London to help the British Government in the last world War, and having already before that time said farewell to South Africa, the Mahatma returned to India with the hallucination that he was destined to become a Prophet He started his mission with determination to destroy all who stood in his way always under the guise of the most high sounding doctrines It will be remembered that he began by professing to be an humble follower of the late Mr

encies and to have special representatives of their own for each of the seven Provinces out of nine in India, but in no circumstances would this decision alter the communal award except with the agreement of all the parties concerned.

Within twenty four hours of the announcement Mahatma Gandhi worked out his plan and wrote immediately to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald declaring that he would resist the Government's decision with his life, "The only way I can do so is by declaring a perpetual fast unto death from food of any kind save water with or without salt and soda. The fast will cease if, during its progress, the British Government, of its own motion or under pressure of public opinion, revise their decision and withdraw their scheme of communal electorates for the Depressed Classes, whose representatives should be elected by the general electorate under the common franchise, no matter how wide it is. It may be that my judgment is warped and that I am wholly in error in regarding separate electorates for the Depressed Classes as harmful to them as to Hinduism. If so, I am not likely to be in the right with reference to other parts of my philosophy of life. In that case, my death by fasting will be at once a penance for my error and a lifting of a weight from off those numberless men and women who have child-like faith in my wisdom. Whereas, if my judgment is right, as I have little doubt it is, the contemplated step is but due to the fulfilment of the scheme of life which I have tried for more than a quarter of a century, apparently not without considerable success." On the 8th September the Prime Minister sent

Gokhale, and thus insinuated himself with the Liberals so successfully that many of them began to believe that whatever the faults of the Mahatma, he was at least honest, and that he was therefore to be preferred to the Tilakite school, whose methods both the Liberals and the Mahatma considered to be not free from blame. By thus ingratiating himself in their favour he destroyed the Liberal Party in the course of a few years. So subtle was the process that some of the followers of the late Mr. Gokhale were apt to regard the Mahatma to be an unofficial member of Servants of India Society. I wonder whether they do so now. I do not wish to speculate what the late Mr. Gokhale himself would have thought, if he could come to life again, of a follower who has destroyed the old Indian National Congress of 1885 and in its place has set up a dictatorship with its monstrosities of "*the blank cheque*," and "*neither support nor oppose*" theories. Everybody knows that the Liberal Party has become to-day the shadow of its former self, if it is not wholly destroyed, largely through the Mahatma.

" He next professed an intense admiration for the late Lokmanya Tilak, and although he found it difficult to swallow the latter in the beginning, he persisted in his efforts in his own subtle manner and expressed the highest regard for the intellectual supremacy of the late Lokmanya, thereby suggesting that the ethical argument was on the Mahatma's side. A lofty moral pose proclaimed from the house-top, although honoured more in the breach than in the observance, struck the unwary into mute admiration and weakened the opponent. So long as Lokmanya was alive, the Mahatma preferred on the whole to lie low,

a reply to Mahatma Gandhi, "In response to a very general request from Indians after they had failed to produce a settlement themselves, the Government much against its will undertook to give a decision on the Minorities question. They have now given it, and they cannot be expected to alter it, except on the conditions that they have stated. I am afraid, therefore, that my answer to you must be that the Government's decision stands, and that only agreement of the communities themselves can substitute other electoral arrangements for those that the Government have devised in a sincere endeavour to weigh the conflicting claims on their just merits." Mahatma Gandhi wrote back to Mr. MacDonald, "The mere fact of the Depressed Classes having double votes does not protect them or Hindu Society in general from being disrupted. In the establishment of separate electorate at all for the Depressed Classes, I sense the injection of poison that is calculated to destroy Hinduism and do no good whatever to the Depressed Classes. You will please permit me to say that, no matter how sympathetic you may be, you cannot come to a correct decision on a matter of such vital importance to the parties concerned." On the 24th September the Indian leaders signed the Yervada Pact, which was duly accepted by the British Government with great satisfaction, and Mahatma Gandhi too broke his fast.

but nevertheless went on with his clever game of mud-throwing against that great man Unhappily in 1920, Lokmanya Tilak died, and the Mahatma got the chance of a life time He paid the most flattering compliment to the memory of Lokmanya Tilak, started what is called the Tilak Swarajya Fund, and collected a crore of rupees in order ostensibly to perpetuate his memory but really to destroy it It is common knowledge that every single one of this crore of rupees was spent in artfully discrediting and treacherously stabbing Lokmanya Tilak's philosophy With that sum he created vested interests for his so called philosophy of faith against reason When the Mahatma cannot subdue, he cajoles and coaxes until his victims themselves got trapped by his strategy Robindra Nath Tagore, Shastri, Sapru, Malaviyaji, Radha Krishan, and many more are the victims of this strategy When coaxing fails, he would stoop still further to conquer and appear to yield as he did in the case of Deshbandhu Das and Moti Lal Nehru, both of whom he ultimately swallowed Those who still survive his tactics, he follows with the implacable love of the Mahatmic type, as in the case of the whole of the Tilakite school, Mrs Beasant, Messrs Vithalbhai Patel, Nariman, Khare, Bose, Roy and innumerable other patriotic leaders and workers If you are not still destroyed, he follows the curious alternative of bluff as against the British Government and a grovelling attitude as towards the Muslims He claims to be a great admirer of the British people They welcome this compliment but are not deceived For the Muslims he claims unbounded love and friendship He would rather die in the hand of Dr Ansari than survive in the hands of Dr.

## CHAPTER II

### Gandhi through the eyes of his Countrymen.

Of all the Indians who have spoken on Mahatma Gandhi, Subhas Chandra Bose is undoubtedly the greatest and probably the truest in his statements. We quote below his words from his well-known book, "*The Indian Struggle*" :—

"There is something in Mahatma Gandhi which appeals to the mass of the Indian people. Born in another country he might have been a complete misfit. What, for instance, would he have done in a country like Russia or Germany or Italy? His doctrine of non-violence would have led him to the cross or to the mental hospital. In India it is different. His simple life, his vegetarian diet, his goat's milk, his day of silence every week, his habit of squatting on the floor instead of sitting on the chair, his loin cloth—in fact everything connected with him has marked him out as one of the eccentric Mahatmas of old and has brought him nearer to his people. Wherever he may go, even the poorest of the poor feels that he is a product of the Indian soil—bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh. When the Mahatma speaks, he does so in a language that they comprehend—not in the language of Herbert Spencer and Edmund Burke, as for instance, Sir Surendra

Moonje. There is nothing he would not do for the Muslims, and the notorious blank-cheque theory owes its origin to the tactics of this kind. He would remain silent over the most atrocious outrages perpetrated by fanatical Muslims on innocent Hindus; massacres, murders, kidnappings, sacrileges on temples—all these he would silently accept with that hateful smile, which is so admired by his hateful *chelas*. But the Muslims are not deceived either. Even a seasoned statesman like the late Sir Sankaran Nair, an ex-president of the Indian National Congress, was driven to refer to the Mahatma as ‘either a fool or a knave.’ Personally, I think, there is no difference between a fool and a knave.

“It is unquestionable that the amazing elasticity of the Mahatma’s mind and conscience makes him say and do the most contradictory things. With the profound air of saintliness he will support two contradictory conclusions if that suits his purpose for the time being ; in the eye of his admirers he increases his saintliness thereby. With non-violence on his lips and in his pen, he was acting as a recruiting Sergeant for the British in the War of 1914—18. At Amritsar, he was urging the Congress to utilize the new reforms. In 1920 he was preparing for an election campaign under the Montague Chelmsford Reforms and was laying down the most meticulous rules as to what kind of candidates should be supported. But as soon as Lala Lajpat Rai in a moment of indignation against the Dyer atrocities at Jalianwala Bag suggested the boycott of the councils, the Mahatma jumped at the idea and made it his own, as he saw that the launching of such non-co-operation would help him with his Muslim

Nath Bannerji would have done, but in that of the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Ramayana*. When he talks to them about Swaraj, he does not dilate on the virtues of provincial autonomy or federation, he reminds them of the glories of Rama.rajya, and they understand. And in talks of conquering through love and *Ahimsa*, they are reminded of Buddha and Mahavira, and they accept him.

"The Indian National Congress of to-day is largely his creation. The Congress Constitution is his handiwork. From a talking body he has converted the Congress into a living and fighting organisation. It has its ramifications in every town and village in India, and the entire nation has been trained to listen to one voice. Nobility of character and capacity to suffer have been made the essential tests of leadership, and the Congress is to-day the largest and the most representative political organisation in the country. But how could he achieve so much within this short period? By his simple-hearted devotion, his relentless will, and his indefatigable labour. Moreover, the time was auspicious and his policy prudent. Though he appeared as a dynamic force, he was not too revolutionary for the majority of his countrymen. If he had been so, he would have frightened them, instead of inspiring them; repelled them, instead of drawing them. His policy was one of unification. He wanted to unite the Hindu and the Moslem; the high caste and the low caste; the capitalist and the labourer; the landlord and the peasant. By his humanitarian outlook and his freedom from hatred, he was able to rouse sympathy even in his enemy's camp. With such purity of character and

friends as the Hindu defender of the Khilafat. At the Second Round Table Conference he declared most unequivocally that he would rather die than allow untouchability to be placed on the statute book. And in 1932 he purchased his life with the help of the Gandhi-Ambedkar Pact, which firmly establishes untouchability on the statute book, and so it stands there. At the time of the earthquake in Bihar in 1934, he boldly declared with incredible cynicism that the Bihar tragedy, which resulted in innumerable number of children including non-Hindu children being buried alive, was due to the anger of God against the presence of untouchability amongst the Hindus. He would advise the world to surrender to any aggressor rather than resist him by a counter force. And yet he would declare, when it suits him, that he would look with indifference on anarchy. He neither supports nor opposes the communal electorates whatever that may mean. He has given even mutually destructive definitions of 'Swaraj,' and when I pointed this out at the Karachi Congress in 1931, he threatened to increase that number to twenty. He wants freedom and independence for India. But he would stand aside when the Amir of Afghanistan invades India, and would even welcome the Nizam as the Emperor of India. He would stand for a United Indian Nation, but at the same time, he would not mind Pakistan if the Muslims wanted it. He does not want the domination of one race or community by another, but he considers the Nizam's rule as cent per cent Swaraj. He hates tyranny but would welcome a tyrant provided the tyrant is a Swadeshi one. The objection is apparently not to tyranny but to its foreign origin. An indigenous tyrant will mean

with such an unprecedented following, why has the Mahatma failed to liberate India? He has failed because the strength of a leader depends not on the largeness but on the character of one's following. With a much smaller following, other leaders have been able to liberate their country while the Mahatma with a much larger following has not. He has failed because while he has understood the character of his own people, he has not understood the character of his opponents. The logic of the Mahatma is not the logic which appeals to John Bull. He has failed because his policy of putting all his cards on the table will not do. He has failed because he has made use of the international weapon. If we desire to win our freedom through non-violence, diplomacy and international propaganda are essential. He has failed because the false unity of interests that are inherently opposed is not a source of strength but a source of weakness in political warfare. Last but not least, the Mahatma has failed because he has had to play a dual role in one person—the role of the leader of an enslaved people and that of a world-teacher, who has a new doctrine to preach. It is this duality which has made him at once the irreconcilable foe of the Englishman, according to Mr. Winston Churchill, and the best policeman of the Englishman according to Miss Ellen Wilkinson.

"What of the future? What role will the Mahatma play in the days to come? Will he be able to emancipate his dear country? Several factors have to be considered. So far as his health and vitality are concerned, it is highly probable that he will be spared many years of

cent per cent Swaraj to the Mahatma. This amounts almost to saying that if an Indian tiger devours the Mahatma, he would prefer it to an attack by a foreign tiger. The snake may safely bite him, so runs the Mahatmic argument, if it is only an Indian snake. In order to secure the support of the Muslims he will pamper them to any extent. But the Muslims also like the British are not deceived. The Mahatma started with the support to Khilafat in 1920 and has continued this pampering for the next twenty years with ever-increasing vigour. But the result was no better. In 1921 he got his reward in the Mopla atrocities in Malabar and in 1940 in the Sukkur massacre in Sind with many intervals of similar atrocities in almost every part of India. But his infatuation has not ended. We had paraded before us the idea of Hindu-Muslim unity as a part of the Mahatma's constructive programme and also as the precursor of Swaraj. But we have instead of achieving the unity, very nearly achieved Pakistan, and the champion of the Hindu-Muslim unity is now an avowed supporter of Pakistan, if the Muslims but want it. He will make a mountain out of a mole-hill at Rajkot, but in Hyderabad with a hundred times more population he will allow tyranny to go on unchallenged. For Mr. Jinnah, the Mahatma shows a respect which is alike hypocritical and degrading but Vinayak Savarkar does not even so much exist for the self than Mahatma.

"This is the correct picture of the Mahatma's mental make-up. With such background there is nothing to wonder if the Mahatma allowed himself to be associated, remotely it may be, indirectly it may be, with the move

to support a foreign invasion of his own country. Is he not prepared to welcome Pakistan if the Muslims want it as already stated? Has he not supported the communal electorates? Has he not, academically it may be, declared that the Nizam as the future Emperor of India has no terrors for him? Is he not the author of the notorious blank cheque theory? Has he not with supreme indifference watched in Bengal, the Frontier Province, and elsewhere, the slaughter of the Hindus, the abductions of Hindu women and similar other outrages? Is he not in short prepared to go to any length if only the Mussalmans accept him as their leader? Is there any surprise therefore, if when religious zeal had reached a fever point and when the Mussalmans were in need of all the support that the Hindus could give them in their misfortune, that the Mahatma should even support an invasion of India if only thereby he becomes the undisputed leader of Hindus and Muslims alike? There is, therefore, nothing inherently impossible in the Mahatma's support to a contemplated invasion of India. There is irrefutable evidence that he did actually encourage an invasion of India by the Amir and even declared that he did not care if the Amir came. He went further and said that he would ask the Indian people not to assist the Government of India in resisting such an invasion. Whether the draft of the telegram, said to have been sent to the Amir regarding him not to make peace with the Government of India but to carry on the third Afghan War, was in the Mahatma's hand or not, may be impossible to ascertain now. But so high an authority as the late Swami Sraddhanand says, "What was my astonishment when I

all are ostracised. Amongst the progressive groups, Socialists, Forward Blocists and Communists—they are there as unwanted guests. The sooner they leave the Congress, the better, according to Gandhiji, for them and the Congress.

"Gandhiji when he once tried to put his own interpretation on the Congress creed of attainment of Swaraj by peaceful and legitimate means, was defeated in the A I C C meeting, but he still insists that only those can remain in the Congress who interpret peaceful as non violent, and legitimate as truthful. If he had all his own way, according to him, he would expel all one by one from the Congress, who did not agree with him, till he was left alone, and then, he would dissolve the Congress as a body having no use for the country. It is a queer phenomenon, that the most non violent of all the persons is translating his thoughts into action in such an intolerant manner.

"If Gandhiji is intolerant in action, he is equally inconsistent in his policy. Only a man endowed with a supersubtle brain can reconcile himself to so many mental acrobatics with which Gandhiji regales his foes and friends alike. He is a friend of the Britishers but a deadly foe of their Government, as if Government was an automaton working ruthlessly without Britishers being responsible for its activities.

'Congressmen whole heartedly condemned the new Constitution that was imposed on India against the wishes of all political parties. It resolved to show its disapproval by non co operating with it. Still, under

saw the draft of the self-same telegram in the peculiar handwriting of the father of the non-violent non-co-operation movement." The Afghan intrigue first came to light through a public speech by Maulana Mohamed Ali in Madras in 1921, declaring unequivocally that if the Amir of the Afghans invaded India, he would assist the Amir. When it was feared that the Maulana would be arrested for making such a treasonable and unpatriotic statement, the Mahatma declared that the Ali brothers had done nothing what he himself would not do. He admitted that his article in *Young India* did amount to an invitation to the Amir to start an invasion. Mr. Andrews, who was such an intimate friend of the Mahatma, told him that the said article bore the interpretation of an invitation to invade. The Mahatma admitted that accusation as true.

"It now remains to add that the evil atmosphere, which has been generated by the Mahatma's endeavours to become a Prophet, has totally demoralised the public life of India. The Mussalmans, whom he chooses to pamper in every possible way, have taken him at his word, and their fanatical section has not only grasped everything that he could give but is asking for more. They now want India to be cut into two pieces under the new-fangled scheme of Pakistan. The stand taken is not merely the protection of a minority in a self-governing India but a two-nations theory—nations so entirely distinguished from each other in culture and outlook that not only they are distinct entities to-day but must remain so till the end of time. In effect his scheme is a crude attempt to ferment a civil war in India and to keep it

Gandhiji's directions, it decided to derive benefit from the Provincial part of it. And the beauty of it was that it was in one and the same resolution that long discussions were made both to work the Constitution and to destroy it.

"Even more incomprehensible was the attitude of Gandhiji towards the Communal Award. It was dubbed as anti-national but Congress could neither reject it nor accept it. In order to show the absurdity of the proposition, I suggested to Gandhiji that instead of saying "We neither accept it, nor reject it," we should say, "We both accept it and reject it." His reply was that my suggestion did not sound well. But the pity was that he could not see that his own proposition was equally laughable.

"Here is another brain twister. Gandhiji has asked people to go to jail because Government would not allow Congressmen to preach non-co-operation with the war. Yet he actually sells blankets worth thousands of rupees to the Indian army to keep the Khadi Bhandars going. When people could not understand such an inconsistent position, he reasoned out that the selling of blankets to the army was a monetary transaction and could not be stopped. Like the Shakespearian quality of mercy, it benefitted both the parties, those who sold and those who bought. Why should one object to such a natural transaction?"

"In the same note that explained his position about selling blankets Gandhiji forbade people to advance loans to the Government. Loans, according to Gandhiji, are not

perpetually going. The minorities in each federated section are to remain hostages for the good conduct of the majorities in the other federated areas. It is conveniently forgotten that if the Muslim minority can demand a Pakistan in India, the Sikh and Hindu minorities in the so-called Pakistan will by a parity of reasoning be entitled to demand a similar dismemberment of Pakistan itself. Why the Hindu and the Sikh majorities in certain districts of Pakistan should not claim separation, we are not told. The fact is that the scheme is the result of a shallow mind whose ambition has got the better of his reason. Mr. Jinnah's conceit prevents him from standing shoulder to shoulder with his equals, and he loves to rule in Pakistan rather than serve in Hindustan. The British Government in the throes of a most serious war is anxious to keep the Indian Muslims in good humour and the Muslim Powers outside India in an attitude of friendly mentality. They have, therefore, remained conveniently silent over the Pakistan issue and have not hesitated to give it even a covert support. But if India is not to be divided into warring provinces as China was at one time, if the unselfish endeavours of patriotic Indians for the last fifty years are not to be stultified, if democracy is not to be smothered in the name of minority protection, if a minority is not to be permitted to veto and hold up the progress of 400 million people, if fanaticism is not to receive a premium, and if the British Government possess even one shred of honesty in dealing with this country, then this monstrous doctrine of Pakistan should be laid low by its prompt and indignant repudiation.

monetary transactions, while the sale of blankets and other materials are When you have got spare money and can make good profit by lending it to the Government, you are helping the war When you have got blankets to sell and can get a better price from an extravagant Government than it is possible for a needy and half-starved peasant to pay, it is only a business transaction How can you solve such an intriguing puzzle ? '

"Whatever the reasons behind Gandhiji's decision to sell war commodities to those engaged in war, they are incomprehensible to a man with ordinary intellect It looks like quibbling or a formula from transcendental philosophy "

"Gandhiji has infused new life into the dead bones of the Indian nation The spirit of fearlessness and self-sacrifice that one sees to day in Indian political life owes its inspiration to Gandhiji's unique example But, it appears, his programme and policy have reached a stage where the law of diminishing returns has begun to operate He has taken Indians much nearer the goal of independence than any other leader But his programme now has grown stale It has lost force to push Indians any further What is wanted is a more realistic and more elastic programme suited to Indian temperament than is offered by Gandhiji's wooden laws that make no concession for the weakness of human behaviour and human character

"Gandhiji lays great stress on working the constructive programme of the Congress For the last twenty years if there is anything on which he has laid emphasis again and again, it is this side of his movement, but as mis-

"I have always cherished the belief that the founders of the Indian National Congress were far-sighted statesmen, that they really believed in an Indian Nation of the future, and that despite religious and racial differences India was destined one day to become a united nation, strong, tolerant, patriotic, religious without being fanatical. The whole history of the United States of America has lent hope to such a conviction. The thirteen crores of Americans are not of one race nor of one religion. The present European War shows how bitter racial feuds are among the European countries, how Christian nations do not hesitate to slaughter one another, how the Poles, the Germans, the Russians, the Bulgarians, the Italians, the French, the Spanish and the innumerable Balkan and Baltic States are ready at a hint to fly at the throat of one another and butcher them without mercy, how the Roman Catholic hanged and quartered the Protestant in the Middle Ages, how the Latin and Non-Latin races in Europe have considered each other as their age-long enemies, how the Scotch killed the English and how the English murdered the Scottish people, and yet in the continent of America, particularly, the United States, these self-same races have managed for centuries to live together in peace and have consolidated themselves into one nation, richer and more powerful than any other. If this is what could be accomplished in America, there is no reason why the faith of the founders of the Indian National Congress should not achieve a similar consummation in this country. Provided we adjure fanaticism, the Hindus and Muslims can still become a united nation, and I am certain, that is also the faith of the Sikh,

fortune would have it, the main items of the Gandhian programme have singularly failed to achieve my substantial success.

"Khadi has been called the central sun of the Gandhian planetary system of self-help. It has amongst its advocates not only a marvellous propagandist like Gandhiji, but millions of Congressmen with tons of money at their disposal for this noble work. But what has been the result? According to the figures given in a recent issue of "Harijan," India consumes every year about 600 crores of yards of cloth. More than half of it is manufactured by Indian Mills; the remaining portion is supplied mainly by England and Japan. The share of Khadi is only about one crore of yards, that is, one-sixth per cent, or about two and a half annas in every one thousand rupees of cloth, which Indians consume. A little arithmetic will show that if India has come to use with Gandhian propaganda one crore yards of Khadi in 20 years, it could take 20 by 600, one thousand and two hundred years, to make India wholly clad. What a wonderful progress we have made in giving effect to the central item of the constructive programme! Gandhiji's movement is a spiritual movement. In matters of spirit limits of time and space do not count. What is twelve hundred years for a programme that deals in infinite values !

"Khadi has now lost all prospects of ever becoming a political or economic weapon, helpful in the attainment of Indian independence. The importance of Khadi Bhandars is now only like that of charitable institutions that look

the Christian, the Parsi, the Jew and the smaller minorities. It would be wrong to ignore their views and to consider that they are so much chattel, rather than they are fellow-citizens, whose voice should receive the most tender consideration. Not one of these latter wants a Pakistan and no other sensible Indian wants it. There are enough cultured and patriotic Moslems like Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, who think in the same direction but their voice is drowned in the dirge of the fanatic. If the ostentatious generosity of the Mahatma were replaced by a truly nationalist outlook in the Congress, if the British Government could be made to realise that the game of divide and rule was up, if the minorities could be reassured by all legitimate or rational concessions to secure them against any conceivable wrong without giving a go-by to the essentials of democracy, India may yet be saved from Gandhism, and the sacred idea of a united nation in India conceived by the founders of the Indian National Congress and fostered by patriots like Lokmanya Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Pt. Moti Lal Nehru, Deshbhandhu Das, Vithalbhai Patel, Kelkar and others, may yet become practical politics."

In conclusion, we quote below a few passages from the two articles of Sardar Sardul Singh Caveesher, President, All-India Forward Bloc, published in the *Tribune* under the captions, "Gandhian Principles" and "Gandhian Policy and Programme."

"All honour to Gandhiji and others who preach the gospel of love and peace and insist on the destruction of lower passions at all costs. But in our enthusiasm for

after the orphans, blinds and cripples in places of pilgrimage. A very laudable object, but having very little to do with wresting power from unwilling foreign hands Gandhiji may or may not realise this, but the British Government does so. Their patronage of Khadi Bhandars by placing war orders with them clearly shows that Khadi has lost all terror for them.

"Gandhiji has often staked his life for Hindu Muslim unity. If there could be degrees in one's love, this question is only a little less dear to him than the propagation of Khadi. But what has been the result? Politically-minded Hindus and Muslims were never before so antagonistic to each other as to day. It was wrong of the Congress to accept separate electorates. They committed another blunder when they agreed to work the Communal Award. But both these blunders pale into insignificance when taking the reins of Government in its hands in the provinces, Congress refused to share power with minorities in Hindu majority provinces. If you agreed to accept Communal representation in the legislatures, how could you refuse communal representation in the Government responsible to those legislatures? Mr Jinnah and his Muslim League have become an easy tool in the hands of people who do not want India to enjoy freedom, but the responsibility of the Congress for driving Muslims to this unfortunate position is not small.

"There is a false propaganda by the Muslim League about the Congress Governments tyrannising over Moslems in Hindu majority provinces, but the very fact that the Congress Governments gave no representation in the ministries to Moslems representing majority Moslem opinion in the provinces concerned, was sufficiently

"I have always cherished the belief that the founders of the Indian National Congress were far-sighted statesmen, that they really believed in an Indian Nation of the future, and that despite religious and racial differences India was destined one day to become a united nation, strong, tolerant, patriotic, religious without being fanatical. The whole history of the United States of America has lent hope to such a conviction. The thirteen crores of Americans are not of one race nor of one religion. The present European War shows how bitter racial feuds are among the European countries, how Christian nations do not hesitate to slaughter one another, how the Poles, the Germans, the Russians, the Bulgarians, the Italians, the French, the Spanish and the innumerable Balkan and Baltic States are ready at a hint to fly at the throat of one another and butcher them without mercy, how the Roman Catholic hanged and quartered the Protestant in the Middle Ages, how the Latin and Non-Latin races in Europe have considered each other as their age-long enemies, how the Scotch killed the English and how the English murdered the Scottish people, and yet in the continent of America, particularly, the United States, these self-same races have managed for centuries to live together in peace and have consolidated themselves into one nation, richer and more powerful than any other. If this is what could be accomplished in America, there is no reason why the faith of the founders of the Indian National Congress should not achieve a similar consummation in this country. Provided we adjure fanaticism, the Hindus and Muslims can still become a united nation, and I am certain, that is also the faith of the Sikh,

deplorable not to need any false and mischievous propaganda to condemn it.

"The dissatisfaction of the vocal sections of the Harijans with the Congress is almost on a par with the Moslem dissatisfaction. The unhealthy importance which Gandhiji gave to the Harijan question has been well exploited by the Government. They have taken Gandhiji at his word and under the garb of improving their miserable lot, have vigorously set them against the Hindus. The Harijans to-day are as clamorous for separate privileges and separate powers as the Moslems. This separatist tendency has grown so strong and profitable that those, who a few years before were ashamed to be regarded as belonging to scheduled castes and tried their best to be known as caste Hindus, now shun co-operation with Hindus and take pleasure in being classed as members of the Scheduled brotherhood.

"Gandhiji put twenty years back an immensely useful programme before the Congress and the country. But the country has refused to follow him, with the result that the programme has miserably failed to achieve the object for which it was promulgated. A General with an elastic mind would have changed his tactics and strategy to suit the changed times and to suit the natural inclination and capacity of his followers. But Gandhiji is immovable. Being personification of humility, he cannot be obstinate ; but he has set limits to his own activities, which he cannot over-step. He cannot move out of the self-created grooves which cripple his undoubted capacity for leadership. That is the Gandhian tragedy. He sits high in the clouds ; he won't face the realities of life ; he refuses to stoop to conquer."

the Christian, the Parsi, the Jew and the smaller minorities. It would be wrong to ignore their views and to consider that they are so much chaff, rather than they are fellow citizens, whose voice should receive the most tender consideration. Not one of these latter wants a Pakistan and no other sensible Indian wants it. There are enough cultured and patriotic Moslems like Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, who think in the same direction but their voice is drowned in the dirge of the fanatic. If the ostentatious generosity of the Mahatma were replaced by a truly nationalist outlook in the Congress, if the British Government could be made to realise that the game of divide and rule was up, if the minorities could be reassured by all legitimate or rational concessions to secure them against any conceivable wrong without giving a go-bye to the essentials of democracy, India may yet be saved from Gandhism, and the sacred idea of a united nation in India conceived by the founders of the Indian National Congress and fostered by patriots like Lokmanya Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Pt. Moti Lal Nehru, Deshbhindhu Das, Vithalbhai Patel, Kelkar and others, may yet become practical politics.'

In conclusion, we quote below a few passages from the two articles of Sardar Sardul Singh Grewesher, President, All India Forward Bloc, published in the *Tribune* under the captions, "Gandhian Principles" and "Gandhian Policy and Programme".

"All honour to Gandhiji and others who preach the gospel of love and peace and insist on the destruction of lower passions at all costs. But in our enthusiasm for

## CHAPTER III

### The Reality behind the Loincloth

IMMEDIATELY after the election of Subhas Chandra Bose as President of the Indian National Congress at Tripuri, Mahatma Gandhi openly declared, "I must confess that from the very beginning I was decidedly against his re election for reasons into which I need not go. Since I was instrumental in inducing Dr Pattabhi not to withdraw his name as a candidate, the defeat is more mine than his. And I am nothing if I do not represent definite principles and policy. Therefore, it is plain to me that the delegates do not approve of the principles and policy for which I stand. I rejoice in this defeat. The minority can only wish the policy and programme of the majority all success. If they can not keep pace with it, they must come out of the Congress. If they can, they will add strength to the majority. The majority may not obstruct on any account. They must abstain when they can not co-operate. I must remind all Congressmen that those, who being Congress-minded remain outside the Congress by design, represent it most. Those, therefore, who feel uncomfortable in being in the Congress may come out, not in a spirit of ill will, but with the deliberate purpose of rendering more effective service."

These historic words have been most misunderstood by all Indians except a few of the leading Right-Wingers,

these principles, we should not shut our eyes to facts that stare us in the face daily in our life. To say, as Gandhiji does, that if a cow would non-violently offer herself to a hungry lion, he would not eat her ; or if you kiss an angry cobra he would not bite you, may look grand and beautiful ; but it is not truth. When Gandhiji says that law of non-violence is irresistible like gravity, he is talking the language of Arabian Nights and not that of what our experience shows us in our day-to-day dealings. It is Gandhism and not commonsense.

“ Without high ideals there would be little progress in the world. But if the ideals put before the people are palpably impossible of achievement, such ideals lose all value as sign-posts for success : an ideal would be no ideal, if it were easily attainable, but an ideal would lose all practical value—if it were an impossible absurdity.

“ Indians have no arms : they cannot win their freedom by the use of arms, which they do not possess. But they cannot win freedom by love either. Neither do they possess or can hope to possess, that virtue in sufficient quantity in the near future. To talk of love in international affairs in face of the European wars of the last fifty years is to talk of Euclidean parallel lines in Einsteinian curved universe ; no such parallel lines exist in nature.

“ India is now quite near the war zone. Military experts declare that our safety is threatened from the west by Germans through Iran and Baluchistan and from the east by Japan through Siam and Burma. In the military protection of the country Indians have no voice

who claim to be the first lieutenants of Mahatma Gandhi. Every body knows that Bose visited Mahatmaji at Wardha soon after the election, and that they had also three hours' conversation, at the end of which, Bose declared that the meeting had been quite cordial, and though they had not arrived at any final decision over the problems yet they had reached certain tentative conclusions. But to the surprise of Bose as well as of all his countrymen, immediately after the interview, twelve Rightist members of the Working Committee tendered their joint resignation! Then again, when Mahatma Gandhi was staying at Rajkot and Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru informed him of Bose's serious illness as well as of the stormy scenes at Tripuri, Mahatmaji kept quiet like a rock. One of the Anglo-Indian papers while reviewing a book on Bose said the other day, "The Mahatma's methods of warfare are relentless. He knows no compromise. Responsibility for the political murder of Mr. Bose lies on his shoulders, and his alone." Bose has been missing from India for a long time and whether he is now declared to be found in Berlin or Rome, everybody seems to feel that the rebel President of the Indian National Congress is lost for ever to his motherland, and the responsibility, though not the blame, has been unfortunately shifted to Mahatma Gandhi, because the guardians of discipline at Wardha once declared their verdict, "The Working Committee has come to the painful conclusion that it will fail in its duty if it condones the deliberate and flagrant breach of discipline by Subhas Chandra Bose. The Working Committee resolves that for his grave act of indiscipline, Mr. Subhas

and no responsibility, but they can certainly defend their hearths and homes from 'goondas' and robbers that spring up like mushrooms during such unsettled times. We have recent examples of this type of disorderliness in Sind, East Bengal, Bombay and Ahmedabad. Gandhiji's advice to people like those of Sind is to leave their homes to robbers and dacoits, and migrate, bag and baggage, or without them, to other parts of India. But what should Indian living in other parts of India do if 'goonda' elements in those parts also have the upper hand? Should they migrate to Afghanistan or Arabia? It is a pity that Gandhiji, as an idealist, cannot realise the sublime absurdity of the impossible position he puts before the victims of unholy greed and lust.

"Anyone trying to defend his hearth and home, children and wife, with lathi or sword, and in certain legally privileged cases, with pistol or gun is a traitor to Gandhiji's cause. Like Shri Munshiji, he should leave the Congress at once. He is an outcaste; the Congress can save itself from being polluted by the touch of such persons only by turning them out of the sacred Gandhian fold.

Gandhiji desires to live in a paradise of his own making. But hypocrisy or self-deception of Congressmen and the self-sacrificing desire for service and leadership put Gandhiji again and again at the head of the Congress. The cream of the Congress, the members of the Working Committee and of the A. I. C. C. passed at Poona a resolution ready to use arms against Nazis and Fascists, who have no personal quarrel with them, if the

Chander Bose is declared qualified as the President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and to be a member of any elective Congress Committee for three years as from August, 1939."

Now, after having listened to all the expert native and foreign, after having scrutinized Mahatma Gandhi's career in South Africa and India, and also after having carefully weighed his own speeches and writings, we are tempted to put one question to ourselves—why is it that Mahatma Gandhi is claimed as the greatest leader of India, as the greatest social reformer, moral regenerator and political thinker of our country, as the noblest champion of freedom in spite of his personal imperfections, in spite of his political blunders and in spite of all his real and seeming inconsistencies in words and deeds? If we study Mahatma Gandhi as man, we find that he had in his early days as much of fulings as any of us could have. He was a slave to passion, a slave to western ways of life in dress and manners, a slave to power, name, influence, wealth, reputation and all the infirmities of the noble or ignoble mind. We must not forget his blood, his inheritance, his education and culture, all of which fashioned his body and mind. If we analyse his life and character from his very early childhood to his return from England after the completion of his studies, we find nothing more striking about him than about any of the vast millions of our country. But the moment he landed in South Africa, he became altogether another man. We can not deny that in the beginning, it was not merely love of freedom, love of justice, love of morality and religion that prompted

Britishers were prepared to liberate Indians. The same Working Committee and the same A.I.C.C., a few weeks later, passed resolutions in Bombay, supporting Gandhiji whole-heartedly in his crusade to defend the right of preaching freely that the use of arms in all places and for all times is a sin. Such a metamorphosis is possible only when magic gives power to the blind to lead the blind. It is miraculous how the strong personalities that adorn Congress carpets and who justly boast of being in mental and moral equipment head and shoulders above leaders of other Indian parties and even of other nations, lose all initiative, and elect to follow principles in which their faith is only nominal. They take pride in following blindly a person whom they do not understand.

"Gandhiji is the apostle of non-violence ; as such tolerance for other people's views is ingrained in the very warp and woof of his nature. Smiling and sweet, he would listen to all sorts of views differing from those of his own as the poles. Malice can never enter his heart even against his most violent opponent ; by long practice he has trained his mind to suppress anger immediately after the first burst. But in action there are few people more intolerant than Gandhiji. Congress was, before his advent, Indian National Congress in the true sense of the word. All political parties were welcomed to its fold. It had liberals, radicals, aristocrats, plutocrats, paupers and peasants among its members. Now it is degenerating into a bogus copy of 'Charkha sang.' Gandhiji cannot work with anyone who does not try to think and act like him. Not only Liberals and Conservatives had to go, the Moslem Leaguers, the Hindu Sabhaites, the Akalis,

him to fight against slavery and tyranny, ill usages and evil customs, social and moral anarchy. He was as ambitious as any of us to earn the name of a pioneer, a leader and even a revolutionary. It was but human. If he helped the British in the Boer War, if he joined them in collecting men and money from India in the last Great War, if he volunteered his personal services in many campaigns as stretcher-bearer or as recruiting Sergeant, it was not because he believed in war or peace, in violence or non-violence but because it suited his purpose, it helped the furtherance of his cause for which he had been fighting. Whether he succeeded or failed in his mission is not the real question.

No body can deny that Mahatma Gandhi has talked and done countless things, which appear even to the casual observer either as downright absurdities or as positive knaveries. He incited the students to boycott schools and colleges, the lawyers to leave the bar, the councillors not to attend the councils, the traders not to deal in foreign goods, the peasants and cultivators not to pay their taxes, the industrialists to take to the charkha and bid good-bye to mills, factories and workshops. He moved the masses—the agriculturists and the industrial workers—to rise up against the landlords and the capitalists. He launched three great movements of one and the same essence but in different forms—Non-violent Non-co-operation, Satyagraha and Civil Disobedience. At the same time he fought most violently against untouchability, illiteracy and intemperance. He has also led the Khilafat movement, and directly or indirectly influenced the Akali movement, the

Kissan movement and even the Trade Union movement. On top of all, he has been the father of the Swadeshi and the Swaraj movements, which to-day stand as the greatest menace to the British rule in India. At the same time he has been interviewing and negotiating with the British Government and making pacts with them. He attended the Round Table Conference at least twice in the teeth of disapproval of his countrymen ; he helped also the Government in recruiting men and collecting materials from our country during the last Great War. He also signed pacts with Lord Irwin and Dr. Ambedkar. He placated the Muslim League and its leaders. Then again, he exiled Nariman, Khare, and Bose from the Indian National Congress, while a few others like Munshi and Satyapal were obliged to leave his camp. His support of Montague-Chelmsford Reforms, his behaviour at Rajkot and on the occasion of the Chauri Chaura tragedy—all appear to be most inconsistent and reflect either his lack of judgment or mental fickleness or physical nervousness.

As most of the critics of Shakespeare agree in the case of Hamlet or Iago that there is a method in their madness or villainy, so also a shrewd student of politics and human psychology as well as a genuine patriot can see that Mahatma Gandhi is neither a friend of the Britishers nor a foe of the Moslems nor a political fool nor a religious or spiritual maniac nor even a moral puritan. If we were to compare him with any of the greatest politicians of the world, he could fitly rank with Chanakya of our country, Machiavelli of Italy, Bismarck of Germany, Francis Bacon of England, Lenin and Trotsky of Russia. But he surpasses them all in his new technique of non-

though he has tried to unearth the treasures of the Gita and the Upanisads, the Ramayana and the Mahabharat He has challenged the ancient traditions and customs, the sacred rites and ceremonies of our country, and at the same time has played the most unredeemable slave to all of them He has talked on sex, marriage, contraceptives, self control and self-indulgence, but none of his arguments is convincing or free from fallacies or personal prejudice He has lent advice to students, to young people and all others as a moral priest, a spiritual father, a social reformer and a political leader Many of the millions have been fooled by his dialectics as the people of Athens used to be fooled by the logic of Socrates or Plato or Aristotle There is, of course, a magic about his manner of spinning arguments though most of them are based on false premises and supported by wrong conclusions There is not a single word in his vocabulary which has not been misconstrued or misapplied only to create a dramatic effect upon his readers or listeners This trick is the same old trick of all politicians, of all social or religious propagandists, who have made no fresh revelations and done no better service to humanity than their predecessors

We for ourselves never take Mahatma Gandhi seriously when he talks of his spiritual fasts or moral resurrections Though we admire his confessions in his private or public life, though we surely wonder at his heroic feats of physical torture and mental discipline yet we believe that there is always a mockery behind them, the mockery of a master conjurer, who believes only in the dramatic

violence, which is a cold-blooded war unlike that of the Nazis, and which does not sink ships with torpedoes or shoot-bombers with anti-aircrafts or blaze cities with incendiary bombs or massacre works of art and civilization with invincible tanks, and yet which works into the very blood of the enemy, slowly poisons it beyond cure, and suffocates the breath to slow but inevitable death. If one studies the physiognomy of Mahatma Gandhi, one finds nothing of the sublime brow or eyes of Lord Buddha though the whole world is acclaiming him as an incarnation of *ahimsa*. There is nothing about his lips or chin or nose that can liken him to Jesus Christ or Lord Krishna, though he is acknowledged as the greatest apostle of selfless love and renunciation. His ears or his head, his five-feet stature or skinny limbs, his gait, his looks or even his silent pose—none gives the slightest indication that he is either one of the greatest thinkers or seers or saviours of the world, and yet not only India but Europe, America, and even England have declared him as one of the greatest world teachers, one of the noblest souls, one of the purest spirits of the age to serve humanity in its sufferings of the body and the mind.

Ela Sen in her short biography of Mahatma Gandhi, says, "When I came face to face with Mahatmaji, there were several things which I was more capable of analysing. Immediately it was apparent to me the amount of suffering that had been inflicted on that body, the amount of mental and physical exhaustion to which he had been submitted, the amount of energy that was still emanating from him, who was by all ordinary standards

effect of his trick and not in the ingenuity of performance of the trick. Many people have accused Mahatma Gandhi of his lust for power, obstinacy, fickleness of mind, intellectual deficiency, extreme partiality and even personal vindictiveness. They have also accused him of hypocrisy, self-contradiction, and deliberate misuse of golden opportunities. Just as there is much of truth in all these accusations so also there is much of misunderstanding and misconstruction of many of his words and deeds. We must not forget that Mahatma Gandhi is not a self-elected Mahatma; it is his blind followers who have worshipped him as a god and have given him that noble epithet. He is not anything but human as we are all, and therefore, he too has his follies, blunders, and prejudices as any mortal breathing. But then, he has something over and above all his failings, and it is his firm determination to free his country from the yoke of foreign rule. Like the utilitarians he cares only for the end and not for the means. Like Machiavelli he follows the principle of the fox to lure his enemy and destroy him like a lion. His smiles and tears are not like our smiles and tears but they are most studied expressions like those of the master stage actor, and they are used with a religious zeal to work out his mighty programme. If we miscall his words and deeds as follies and frailties, it is we who are fools and not he. He knows as much as we do that the charkha alone can never solve our economic problem, that the untouchables shall ever remain untouchables, that the capitalists shall have to exploit the labourers for all ages to come, that democracy is an international quibble, that the Hindus and the Muslims will have to sink their

an old man. Yet his body was upright even in its frailty, and though he had to use a stick, he was not bowed, and the crystal clear look in his eyes spoke not of age but of vastly matured wisdom.<sup>3</sup> His entire self was lit by a spiritual luminosity that added to his keen sense of humour and statesmanlike qualities. He combines the heart and soul of a spiritual preceptor with the agile brain of a statesman, and it is this strange combination that looks out of his eyes." The same enamoured Indian lady writes again about her great hero, "This small, frail man, singularly unattractive by ordinary standards of appearance, fills the role of a greater dictator than Hitler or Mussolini, with all their armies and armaments. He sways the countryside, not by fear or force of arms, but by love and unswerving devotion to the cause of the masses. His authority flourishes from one end of India to the other, from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin; his word is law, not because of his might, but because of his great spirit nursing the good of his people. Dictator is too vulgar an epithet to be used with regard to him, and can only be done so comparatively, seeing that, at his insistence and teaching, age-old traditions and prejudices have been swept aside."

Nobody denies that Mahatma Gandhi has a great magnetism about his personality but this magnetism does not lie in his greatness as it lies in the weakness of his worshippers. Our readers may be surprised and no less stunned to hear our definition of greatness. Greatness may be a virtue or a vice, but it is surely nothing but a weakness of the minds of others, who play the fool to attach an undue importance to some particular quality of

differences some day or other in order to win their common victory, that non-violence is not a creed but a policy of the slave world, that Satyagraha movement is a positive misnomer, and Civil Disobedience campaign is but a step to anarchy, that the Native States are not separate entities but an integral portion of the same country and constitution, that there cannot be any peace without armament, any freedom without war, that all pacts and charters are mere scraps of paper and all sacred pledges are meant for violation and not for observance, that love of power, wealth and conquest is inherent in human nature, that civilization like religion is the biggest hoax on earth, that morality, virtue, decency, fellow-feeling, brotherhood and all such catch-phrases are nothing but conventions, which are made and unmade by man in various epochs and different climes only to suit his convenience and feed his craze !

To do full justice to the Loincloth we are tempted to quote below a sketch of the Mahatma as painted by Krishnalal Shridharani, one of his staunchest disciples, in his book, "*War without Violence*," which will give a chance to our readers to compare the two pictures side by side in order to discover the true reality behind the Loincloth :—

"Every Hindu familiar with the *Puranas*, the sacred books, knows that each age (*Yuga*) has had an *Avatar*. There have been nine such already, manifesting in their sequence the process of evolution. Now, it is ordained that there would be yet another incarnation, and that 'virtue would be set on her seat' a tenth time, thereby ending this present *Kali Yuga* (Age of Darkness). This time the

human nature. Take any of the greatest religious reformers —Buddha, Christ or Mohammad. They are great in the eyes of the world because they have flattered the curiosity of mankind that strives to know the unknown and visualise the image of the invisible Maker of the universe, who may or may not exist at all. If you say, Hitler, Napoleon or Nelson is a great man, it means that you have a personal weakness for the lust for conquest, for the love of power, for the passion for destruction and ruin. If you worship the scientists, the philosophers and the poets, you are merely betraying your self-love, which is being reflected in your weakness for imperfect knowledge, perishable beauty or misleading or fallible truth. Then again, the very same qualities of human nature are hated and loved at the same time by different peoples and at different times. Is not Hitler's lust for conquest the same as the love of supremacy of the Imperialists over their subject-countries? Are not the means and the end of war the same whether it is launched in the cause of religion or freedom or social and national progress?

In the same way, Mahatma Gandhi is great to-day not only in the eyes of his countrymen but also in the eyes of practically the whole world. So far Indians are concerned, Mahatma Gandhi seems to have studied most carefully their vital weaknesses, of course, not to exploit them, but to cure them by slowly and gradually disillusioning the minds of the blind superstitious souls. In the beginning, of course, in order to draw their attention and create their confidence he has to play all sorts of tricks of dress, manners, eating and drinking, and even of the ideals of life. He knows that Indians by tradition

'Man among men' would be Kalki, say the *Puranas*, and it would be His pleasure to usher in an era of light by destroying the malignants who bedevil his people. In the hour of destitution and agony, the Hindu is wont to look up to the high heavens and wait for an *Avatara* to come down on earth and clear the path for him. This is not merely his individual habit ; it is the custom of the community. And what would be a darker hour than this, asks the thinking Indian, who has observed, rightly or wrongly, half-starved, half-naked, millions of Indian living for decades on the verge of death. They felt enslaved by an alien people, and they even saw the tallest among them being humiliated by the petty underlings of a sovereign overseas. Not so conscious of the political and economic issues, the masses were alive to the affronts to their centuries-old culture. They have heard, half-amused and half-indignant, the missionaries of the ruling race calumniating the Hindu gods ; they have seen churches rise where once stood their temples. The high caste, the privileged, the upper-crust, noticed the *Mahabharata* being replaced by the *Iliad* on the shelves of seats of learning, and Kalidasa by Shakespeare. The Sanskrit Pandit has had to learn an alien tongue to get a job. The aristocrat realised with a deep sense of humiliation that he must give up the costume of his forefathers and ape the European in order to earn a respectable living. The Brahmin and the untouchable, the caste and the out-caste, the men and the class, all alike felt that every insult to their culture was an affront to Mother India.

" And consciously or unconsciously they were ex-

and culture are extremely religious, idealistic, conservative, sentimental, and spiritualistic. He is perfectly aware that his countrymen have got the greatest pride in their own culture and learning, religious rites and ceremonies, social conventions, customs and usages. He is conscious also that Indians are believers in toleration, non-violence or *ahimsa*, simplicity of life and purity of thought, self-sacrifice and renunciation. That is why, the first trick Mahatma Gandhi has played is his loincloth, which is not only the historic badge of an Indian Sanyasi but also the necessary garb of the Indian peasantry that forms three-fourths of the starving millions of our country. Even the poorest beggar feels not ashamed of his tattered rags in the face of Mahatmaji's loincloth, which inspires at the same time in the hearts of the weak religious-minded or superstitious people of rank and dignity, the feelings of humility and godliness, reverence and worship. The next trick is the goat's milk or frugal diet, which is of course, purely vegetarian and which therefore earns immediately the necessary applause from those who believe in the simplicity and economy of life. It is said that Mahatmaji keeps his chest bare because the untouchables are not permitted to wear the sacred thread. This identification with the depressed classes at once links him with the millions of the sufferers, who have been crushed by centuries of ill-usage and social and religious tyrannies. It is doubtful if Mahatma Gandhi sincerely believes in the Charkha as an alternative to the mills and the factories. His arguments for cottage industries for the occupation of the idle villagers are perfectly sound, but he knows quite well that such

pectant, they felt that an *Avatar* was imminent. They recalled the promise of the Lord and felt sure that *Kalki* must come to chastise the evil doers and restore Mother India to her traditional majesty. Men's hearts were ready to receive a Messiah, they were eager to endow some one, as it were, with a halo. The hour was auspicious for the right man to be taken or mistaken for God. They had to wait for a long while facing the cross roads. Many a promising personality proved to be a false alarm. It was about this time that there began to be rumours of a tiny Indian who was fighting in South Africa against a powerful Government. What interested the illiterate masses more was the news that he was unarmed though fighting, and that he bade his followers not to raise even a finger against the opponent. The villagers avidly consumed information about this man who was preaching and practising the creed of *ahimsa* or non violence, the gospel that Buddha preached, and Mahavira also.

"So, when Gandhi returned to India in 1915, he had a ready and eager audience. Curious crowds gathered around him wherever he went. The villagers noticed that Gandhi distrusted the machine and preferred journeys on foot whenever possible. The sight reminded them of the Buddha walking from village to village to spread his gospel, and of thousands of *Yogis* who annually make long journeys on foot to visit sacred shrines. Gandhi's simple life his passion for truth, his fearlessness were in keeping with the Indian tradition of the Mahatma, the great soul. His vegetarian diet quickened the peculiar Indian belief that all living creatures are sacrosanct. The villagers observed with tacit and peculiarly Indian reverence the

small scale industries can never solve Indian's economic problem. Besides, the charkha and the handloom are India's most ancient implements of trade and commerce, and as such they have a ready appeal to our imagination in spite of their imperfections.

There is nothing new about Mahatma Gandhi's creed of *ahimsa* or non-violence. It has been the religion of the Indians or rather of the East ever since the birth of Lord Buddha. Whatever may be the virtue of the creed, it is not only a sacred sentiment to the Hindus but also a great necessity to the race of slaves, who cannot afford to preach or practise violence of any kind in the face of the most powerful British army and navy. Besides, the creed of non-violence is the creed of self-sacrifice and suffering, which is a far more potent instrument of uniting mutually hostile and scattered races than any acts of heroism exhibited in the battle-field at present or in the past. Those who genuinely regard Mahatmaji as an apostle of *ahimsa* are bound to be disappointed by his active participation in violence during campaigns of the Boer War in South Africa or by his enthusiastic support to recruitments of men and material from India during the last Great War. If non-violence were not a mere policy with him, he would not have behaved so strangely in the eyes of his countrymen at the time of the Chauri-Chaura tragedy or of the Amritsar massacre ; he would not have banished from the Congress Subhas Chandar Bose, who is no less a patriot and leader of his country than the Mahatma himself. Of course, the British Government also knows quite well that non-violence can never make a slave country free in spite of Mahatma Gandhi's repeated

fact that Gandhi was leading the life of a *Brahmachari*, a celibate, calling his wife *Ba* or Mother. They identified him with Mahavira, the Jeena, the conqueror of all the six senses. His loincloth was reminiscent of *Isa Masih*, the Christ. His use of the Ramayan-Mahabhatta language and his constant allusion to *Rama Rajya*—the ideal kingdom of Rama—as India's goal, sounded to the multitude like preachings of ancient *Rishis*. His habits of squatting on the ground invoked before the Indian's eyes the familiar sitting posture of Lord Buddha. It was a great change indeed from the galaxy of other contemporary Indian leaders who spoke the alien *Angrezy*, dressed like Europeans, and sat on chairs; here was a man who deliberately neglected the current routine and who appealed to India's elemental ideals of greatness. Curious crowds around Gandhi began to assume the form of throngs of devotees. Villagers travelled miles to have a *Darshan*—ceremonial glimpse of Gandhi. Mothers brought their ailing babies to be touched by Gandhi and to be healed. Long queues of peasants waited for a chance to take the dust from his feet, a devotional ceremony, which after hundreds of performances, left Gandhiji's feet almost raw. The city dwellers, the reporters, the leaders, followed him wherever he went, even to the remotest village. And for the time being, the hamlet where Gandhi pitched his tent became the hub of the nation.

“ In no time, Gandhi's picture was on the thatched wall of practically every hut in India. His photographs hung in most bungalows of the upper middle class, and his busts in marble and bronze adorned the mansions of

sermons and demonstrations of *ahimsa*. If there is any real efficacy of this novel technique of bloodless war, it shall be proved in the case of India, and the full credit shall go to the great master of the sublime trick.

Mahatma Gandhi has captured the imagination of his countrymen because he speaks not the language of the foreigner, quotes not the culture and civilisation of other lands, and sets no example of heroism in religion, morality or learning of any other country except his own. He talks of asceticism, brahmacharya, Ramayana and Mahabharat, Buddha and Sankaracharya, Kalidas and Tagore, Gita and the Upanisads, Charkha and Khaddar, which at once endear him to the hearts of the millions, who have lost sight of their great heroes or totally forgotten their own philosophy, religion and fine arts. These are only a few of the master tricks of the great psychologist, who knows the very pulse and the blood of his countrymen, and who wants to thrill once again the frozen circulation of thought and movement in the benumbed veins. If such a conjurer signs pacts with the Government or placates the conflicting races and communities by an open avowal of the separate electorate and the communal award or banishes from the Congress camp some of the born revolutionaries or even indulges too frequently in moralisings and self-contradictions, should the world take him seriously or as a mere comedian upon the stage of a country, which is striving to realise its political salvation by legitimate and peaceful means?

Mahatma Gandhi has roped not merely the capitalists and the labourers but also the landlords and the peasants,

industrial tycoons of Bombay, Calcutta and Ahmedabad More than one Maharaja ensconced Gandhi's portrait in his private chambers, if not for discretion's sake, in his reception hall Penny postcards showed the new hero sitting on the lap of Mother India Some of the postcard artists portrayed him wielding his spinning wheel after the fashion of Krishna's manipulation of his invincible *Sudarshan Chakra* or the disc of fire Other postcards depicted as he sat in meditation under a tree in the manner of Buddha with a halo around his face He was shown holding Mount *Govardhana* on his little finger just as Krishna did, so that his farming community, according to the *Puranas*, might be protected and saved from devastating rains Everywhere he was identified with one of India's past *Avatars*

"Mystical coincidence has played a substantial part in establishing Gandhi as the idol of an abnormally religious people Early in his career as the leader of the Indian people, when ground was being broken for the first non-co-operation movement of 1919—1920, a strange story was bandied about and it helped to create Gandhi's reputation as an *Avatar*—incarnation of God—in the eyes of the masses The incident took place in a tiny village tucked away in the Province of Bihar In connection with a lecture tour, Gandhi was driving from one village to another on a cart road An old blind woman had heard that he was to pass by her hamlet, but was not scheduled to stop there Undaunted, she trudged through the furrowed fields under the scorching tropical sun and stood by the dusty road expecting to hear the whirring of his automobile

He has roped also the educated middle class, that represents the official, the professional and also the anti-national population of our country. He is utilising the money of the capitalists for the service of the starving millions and also for carrying on his non-violent campaigns of satyagraha and civil disobedience. He has set free the untouchables to strengthen the upper classes who have been weakened by their own process of segregation. He has made the peasants and the industrial workers, conscious of their wretchedness and also of the process of exploitation by the landlords and the capitalists. He has disillusioned the eyes of the educated class by bringing home to them that they have been crippled by their blessed form of education, which makes nothing but a race of clerks. He has infused into the hearts of the whole country the ideal of the Charkha, the love of Khaddar, the charm of village life, the dignity of labour, the sacredness of plain living and high thinking, the virtue of self-sacrifice, and above all, the love of one's own country.

Mahatma Gandhi has often been declared as a great friend of the English people though not of the British Government. He has been claimed to be a faithful ally to the Mohammadans, the Sikhs, the Christians and even the Anglo-Indians. There is plenty of truth in all such conjectures, though of course, one cannot be too sure of one's inferences. Just like Tagore Mahatma Gandhi has good regards for the English people because the English people, whatever way they might have dealt with us, have built up such a big empire, not by mere fraud or

Strange to say, when Gandhi's car reached the spot, suddenly a tyre went flat, and its occupants had to alight for a time. Gandhi's eyes fell on the blind woman, and he approached her in humble obeisance. The old creature, perceiving a hand of God in the accident, prostrated herself at Gandhi's feet and wept.

"Similar tales have often made headlines in the leading newspapers of the country. Once, for instance, when Gandhi was serving one of his numerous terms of imprisonment, an aged widow in Bardoli, the Thermopylae of India's non-violent War, dreamed that his spirit pierced the stone walls in order to come and heal her invalid son. Next day, the boy was reported to be in normal health. The stories of miraculous healings and of Gandhi's disappearances from jail are endless. The faithful still think that the Bihar earthquake was sent by God to chastise the orthodox Hindus, who objected to Gandhi's anti-untouchability campaign. Finally, there is the story of the discovery of the most unusual horoscope dealing with Gandhi. In 1930, during the heat of the Civil Disobedience Campaign, a southern Brahmin astrologer announced the finding of a long-sought document, mentioned in the *Puranas*, which he believed to be centuries old. When its contents were made public in the national press, the entire populace shook its heart over what seemed to be an ancient heralding of Gandhi's coming and his exploits on this earth. The eventual victory of Gandhi and of Satyagraha was also a part of the prediction. The Indian public, moreover, is always hearing from notable astrologers who forecast nationalist victories for Gandhi on the eve of a political

meanness but by great deeds of heroism and self-sacrifice; by monumental works of science, art, philosophy and literature. There is always some mark of greatness in every nation or people whoever happen to rule over others for such long centuries, otherwise, empires built entirely on tyranny, falsehood, exploitation and hatred must crumble down like a house of cards sooner or later. Mahatma Gandhi can never think himself or the Hindus as distinct and separate from the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Christians or the Anglo-Indians, because he believes that all these communities or races have sprung practically from the same blood, have breathed the same culture, have been born on the same soil, and also have lived under the same sky for centuries. He does not consider the Native States or their Princes as outside India whatever may be the claims of the Government or of the States themselves. To him Pakistan and Hindustan are the same though Mr. Jinnah and Dr. Moonje may demand a demarcation of their respective territories. It is often ungraciously argued that Mahatma Gandhi sometimes flirts with the Muslim League, sometimes with the Government, sometimes with the Hindu Mahasabha. If he flirts at all, we are sure, he will not betray anybody at the cost of any other. If Mr. Jinnah or any of his followers has genuinely misunderstood the Mahatma's real attitude, he does not deserve to be the leader of his party nor a patriot of his country. But if the misunderstanding is deliberate, such a wilful blunder can do no service to any body.

It is absolutely a wrong idea that Mahatma Gandhi sides with the Right-Wingers and is deadly opposed to

contest Naturally, the public remembers only those few forecasts, which according to the statistical law of probability have come true

"The deification of Gandhi, however, is the act of a people born and bred in the *Avatar* tradition, and is not Gandhi's own manœuvre. The canonization has come unsought. The halo has been added by the masses and is not of Gandhi's own manufacture. His emergence as a prophet of the Indian people or as a *charismatic* leader, to use Max Weber's concept—out of a politician pure and simple has been nurtured by the peculiar faiths, traditions, and beliefs of the multitudes. Customs and beliefs, however unsound and unscientific they may be, have a capacity for moulding attitudes and for producing social action, hence their sociological reality. They can neither be ignored nor rendered ineffective. Consequently, Gandhi, the Mahatma, the result of mass psychology, is as significant, as Gandhi, the statesman, the result of his individual nurture and nature. It was people's hearts, no doubt, that enshrined him under a halo, but it was also a truism that his consequent prophetic role in turn endowed the straightforward political struggle of the Indians with the richness and profundity of a great social movement. What is more significant, even Gandhi himself cannot have it otherwise. All his efforts of divesting himself of the halo of ceasing to be a Mahatma, have failed utterly. In spite of all his denials of divinity and confessions of moral lapses, he continues to be worshipped as a deity by the masses.

"This faith in Gandhi's divine mission is so deeply imbedded in the psychology of the man in the-street that

the Left-Wingers even in the Congress camp. Some of his leading followers might be labouring under this pathetic notion, and it is no wonder that even the masses are being considerably influenced by this misconception. If Mahatmaji is found to behave rather strangely on certain occasions with any undue inclination to this or that side of the balance, it is not because he is a born Tory or because he is completely incapable of conversion to the opposite camp, but because he fears radicalism, which is generally the progeny of haste and impatience and therefore fraught with disastrous consequences to any noble cause that has got to be guided and balanced with sufficient prudence and caimness. In our opinion, Mahatma Gandhi is one of the most notorious opportunists, most incorrigible pacifists, who weigh in the strictest balance the tide of affairs, the pulse of movements, the precision of fateful moments, and who after having gathered all the contending forces under their full control release them again to work their own irresistible ways as Nature does with storms, cyclones, hurricanes, tornados, floods and earthquakes.

Those who take Mahatma Gandhi as the saint of Segaon, as the ascetic of Wardha, as the saviour of the Untouchables, as the champion of the unlettered, as the magician of the Charkha are sadly mistaken. There is not a subject connected with the moral, religious, social, educational, economic and other aspects of Indian life on which he has not talked or written. Is there any syllable in any of his words which is not a bundle of contradictions. Like Bernard Shaw he has merely twisted words into their unnatural significance. He has given us nothing new

to him truth and ‘Gandhi says so’ have come to be synonymous. They refuse to hear words to the contrary, however legitimate and justified the other side may be. To impale Gandhi spells the ruin of a newspaper, for the circulation tends to dwindle down without the help of censorship or storm troopers. The *Hindustan* of Bombay suffered from this intangible reader-censorship in 1930. Indian newspapers largely subscribed to by Europeans and pro-government clerkdom, had to change its tone when it felt the unmistakable effects of the spontaneous boycott of the people.

“The belief in Gandhi’s infallibility is strongest in the villages. To the villagers there are only two camps in India—*Gandhi wallahs* and Sirkar (the government) ; and the later, of course, is wrong. Traditionally suspicious of strangers, the villagers receive you with abundant hearts and open doors if a Gandhi cap slants across your brow. Gandhi’s name is the best currency in the hands of Congress propagandists, for the illiterate masses, unable to understand the intricacies of politics—economic issues, just know by instinct that what Gandhi advocates is in their own interest. In attributing a prophetic role to Gandhi, however, the multitudes were not entirely unearthly in their inspiration. Their devotion has a solid foundation in Gandhi’s own ascetic and self-sacrificing character. As already pointed out, it was Gandhi’s *charisma* which demanded obedience; it was Gandhi’s own behaviour pattern that inspired the masses to endow him, as it were, with a halo. Gandhi became a god to them precisely because he reminded them of god-like personalities from India’s past. What appealed to them most was the

streamlined, utilitarian version of saintliness that Gandhi was displaying before their very eyes. For, he is not the traditional *yogi* withdrawn to a cave in the Himalayas, and even the most blind *yogi* devotee knows that at times the needs of our complex civilisation are beyond the influence of a man of meditation alone. The multitudes approve of Gandhi as a man of action, a twentieth century Mahatma, one who can tackle political, social and economic problems and handle politicians adroitly. They have seen him in his work-a-day life, doing the same things as they do, but with an unusual twist, which to them appears *charismatic* or superhuman.

"The *Charismatic* quality is exemplary—something to be imitated as a duty. Gandhi's role as an ideal leader, therefore, is significant. People have an entirely new conception of leadership since Gandhi's advent on the political scene. Formerly, brilliancy, a glib command of English, a comfortable bank account, noble birth, and the stamp—of Oxford or Cambridge were the assets that made a leader in India. To-day the tables are turned. A man with these accoutrements has to strive against heavy odds if he hopes to rank now. Instead, a leader has to be simple, preferably in loin cloth ; for Gandhi is so. He must have a long record of suffering at the hands of the British and he must have sacrificed all he had : for that is what Gandhi has been through. He must be fearless like Gandhi, and must know how to speak in the people's tongue. Gandhi's vegetarian diet is also a fashion to the point of a requirement, and many a meat-loving Mohammadan and Hindu leader has changed the

far less lenient with himself. Perhaps the following is the best example to illustrate how completely Gandhi lives for his cause. The world of self-entertainment is as remote to him as Coney Island is to St. Helena. One day during his last visit to London, his secretary, much amused, carried to him a visiting card bearing the name of Charles Chaplin. Whereupon Gandhi, in all sincerity, inquired, "And who might that distinguished gentleman be?"

"Neither Gandhi's *charisma* nor the charm of his personality, however, would have been enough to have made him the sole representative of the Indian people that he has become, or to have kept him on his lofty pinnacle all these years. There are *Yogis* and *Gurus* enough in India, and some have greater claims on saintliness than Gandhi. In the second place, it is not hard to find, as every tourist knows, Indian people of great charm, with winning, disarming personalities. But neither these *Gurus*, respected as they are, by the people, nor the persons of irresistible charm have succeeded in becoming what Gandhi has become—"the only man who can deliver the goods"—in India. That is because Gandhi is more than a pious man and an appealing person ; he is a politician as well. Added to his prophetic role and his charming personality is something which integrates all other sides of his nature—the strength which comes from a prudent policy. And it is this triple combination—the Mahatma, everybody's *Bapu* (daddy) and political strategist—that has made Gandhi.

"Before Gandhi's appearance in the Indian political mosaic, the nationalist movement consisted of a few

eating habits of a life-time. Gandhi's moral code is inflexible and has doubtless pinched more than one carbon-copy leader. The writer has heard murmurs of dislike against even Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, whose popularity is second only to Gandhi's, because he indulges in an occasional cigarette. The change is complete. The entire Congress organisation is studded now with little Mahatmas. The erstwhile natural leaders, mostly England-returned lawyers, are left waiting on the roadside while illiterate, low-caste but determined and sincere village workers march to the full glory of the Congress High Command.

"Added to Gandhi's *Charisma* are all the attributes of a model. As an originator of fashions, Gandhi can well be the envy of Hollywood stars. For there can be no competitor in India when he sets the tempo and the pace. Early in his career in India about 1916, he used to wear a shirt instead of a plain loin cloth. Once just by accident, the collar button of his shirt was seen open in one of his photographs. Open collars became the order of the day from then on. The white headgear, introduced by Gandhi, shaped and tipped over our eye much like the U. S. Army's overseas cap, has become so popular that nearly every man in India owns atleast one ; officially, they are the insignia of Gandhi sympathisers. High blood pressure is now the most fashionable and common ailment in the upper-crust India, for Gandhi suffers from it occasionally. Gandhi's *Charisma* is admitted even by his adversaries. His guileless and transparent personality makes him loveable even when

organizations formed from India's wealthier class whose sole function was to bicker mildly with the government when the latter drastically violated the former's vested interests. Their protests and petitions, however, were impotent because there was no sanction behind them. The great masses were still untouched, and in this lay an inexhaustible store, as it were, of human energy. Any man who could unleash that energy and moulded it into concerted social action was destined to be *the Leader*.

The politician in Gandhi met historical necessity with his practical programme of Satyagraha. As pointed out elsewhere, it was humanly impossible for India to rise in an armed revolt against the British Government. Britain cannot be beaten, Gandhi maintained, at her own game. Even a network of secret terrorist societies cannot bring the government down, for the very fact that it must remain underground would prevent its organisation on a nation-wide scale. To lead the masses of the nation into action, the movement should be at once dynamic and legitimate. The writer still remembers very distinctly Gandhi's solemn figure, with eyes half-closed, addressing a multitude of people assembled for the evening prayer on the eve of his famous March to the Sea. He began with these words, "The very fact that you all are here this evening, in spite of your expressed determination to overthrow the existing order, shows that my method is the only way out. Had we entered on our programme a small item, say, such as slapping a representative of the bureaucracy, we would have been prevented even from assembling here this evening. But we are out to invite

sought against, and respected when denounced. As far back as a quarter of a century ago, General Smuts, to take one instance, while imprisoning Gandhi in South Africa, confessed that the proper procedure should have been the other way around, and that he would have committed the same treason had he been in Gandhi's shoes. Completely won over, the General himself went to the prison to negotiate with the Indian leader and signed a pact. "I get," remarked Gandhi, "the best bargains behind prison bars." A decade later, Gandhi was again arraigned in a law court, this time before an English Judge in India. While sentencing Gandhi, who had by then become a Mahatma, to six years' imprisonment, the Judge observed, "If the course of events should make it possible for the Government to reduce the period and release you, no one will be better pleased than I."

"This same honest-to-goodness quality of Gandhi's is largely responsible for the frequent invitations he receives from the Viceregal Palace. Attired as usual in his home-spun loin cloth, Gandhi has been frequently seen climbing the steps of the Viceroy's Lodge in the past few months to confer with His Majesty's highest representative in India. Gandhi's formula for disarming his adversaries and quelling opposition is embodied in the hackneyed aphorism : "Love thy enemy." It is characteristic of a *Charismatic* leader that he neither treats his opponents or persons possessing different values and different view-points nor as enemies ; rather he treats those who resist him or ignore him as delinquent in duty. His attitude seems to proclaim, as it were, "They have not seen the light as yet, but there is still hope for them."

suffering, and to inflict it. And hence, the disability of government to suppress us legally." He offered his programme of non-violent direct action to the restless masses and with it his challenge that it could lead to their political freedom. The people were ready to resort to plans that sounded only half as good. What is more significant, what Gandhi said was written in their scriptures. So, it ruffled their traditional springs of emotion.

"Gandhi stretched his realism upto the daily bread of the toiling masses. What his Satyagraha would do for their political needs, his spinning wheel programme would accomplish for their economic desperation. The people that Gandhi had to deal with were, to quote his own phrases, semi-starved, half-naked, illiterate and superstitious. A hundred and fifty years of servitude and a systematic humiliation of their culture and creed had left them human wrecks in body and mind, lacking in self-confidence—Gandhi's problem, therefore, was two-fold, namely, economic relief and mental regeneration. First, he had to give them bread in order that, in the second place, he could shake them out of their slave mentality. Had he favoured industrialisation on a large scale as the remedy for India's economic distress, he might have added to the coffers of the fortunate few who have a common cause with the government in exploiting the masses. This might have also given employment to the urban population, and enriched the middle class of a few towns and cities that can easily be counted on the fingers. But India is a vast continent, and 85 per cent of its population eke out a hand-to-mouth existence in the 73000

Those who have observed Gandhi's methods at close range know that, like the lawyer and soldier he is, he follows a carefully planned procedure, and that each new dissenter is a challenge to his skill. His first manœuvre, when an *impasse* arises, is to cease public utterances and controversy through the printed word. Instead, he seeks a personal interview with the opponent or spokesman of the opposition, as the case may be. Being an exceedingly gracious person, his first inquiries during the intimate meeting are after the opponent's health and his family's; he knows and remembers every name of any consequence to his adversary. With the amenities out of the way, he turns to a lengthy review of the past when both of them worked shoulder to shoulder and advised each other—Gandhi's way of emphasizing with all his persuasive power of the fundamental unity—underlying their temporary differences. But even at this time Gandhi does not broach the issue ; he lets his opponent air his grievances first. It is then that Gandhi lets loose a barrage of logical arguments with all the ease acquired while practising law. Finally, he convinces his adversary that both parties have the same end in view, and their only difference lies in their way of gaining this mutual objective. The straightening out of these little residual differences Gandhi leaves for the inevitable next interview. But as it is expected, in most cases when the adversary comes to see Gandhi again, he is fine shape for the final adjustment of minor points. It is possible that Gandhi is conscious of his own charm. In countless instances when he has found himself in a tight place he has contrived to interview his critic or antagonistic per-

villages scattered over its entire area, the majority of them being far away from a railroad station. The whole rural population is occupationally agricultural and leads an idle life for atleast half of the year for lack of any side-industry. Apart from the fact that there is no capital to raise big industrial plants, to save the wasting of such a mighty mass of human energy, was a great economy in itself. Keenly aware of this, it was Gandhi's commonsense and native insight which led him to launch his programme for the revival of cottage industries, with the spinning wheel as the symbol of the movement, and the actual means to its success. Thus, figuratively, Gandhi became identified with the dispensing end of a vast bread-line of semi-starved thousands whose average income is not more than three dollars and sixty cents per month.

"The politician Gandhi has a natural gift for the unusual and the startling. He wanted to identify himself with the poverty-stricken masses. His curious effort in that direction manifests itself in the devolution of his dress. From tip-top and up-to-date European suits, he has passed through a shirt and a *dhoti* stage, and terminated at a loincloth. For he should not put on more than what his poor compatriots can afford. Luxuries of the Maharajas at his disposal, his simple food consists mainly of dates and curds. And of all the animals in the world, he prefers a goat's milk. The dish for every meal is the same battered, tin objects which he brought with him

sonality. In the majority of these encounters, his disarming smile and penetrating eyes have saved the day for him. On the eve of his recent interview with Mr. Jinnah, the Moslem Communalist leader, for instance, he declared on April 23, 1938, "We are friends, not strangers. It does not matter to me that we see things from different angles of vision." The power of Gandhi's *personal touch method* in politics is now widely recognized that many an adversary, eager to keep up the controversy, seeks to avoid seeing him personally. Once, when a communalist Mohammadian lawyer was fomenting the Moslem League against Gandhi's National Congress, some friends suggested to the Moslem leader that he should see Gandhi in an effort to end the controversy. The Mohammadian declined the suggestion with the remark: "I will never do that. I am afraid, Gandhi will convert me to his own view-point." The select group around Gandhi would inform you, if somewhat hesitatingly, that Gandhi's personal touch method (called the 'human touch' by the Marquis of Zetland, who framed the new India Act) was one of the chief reasons for the great nationalist victory of 1931. After the bitter nation-wide fight of 1930, Lord Irwin 'the Christian Viceroy', as Gandhi dubbed him, released Gandhi from one of His Majesty's numerous prisons and invited the erstwhile ward of the State to the Viceregal Lodge for negotiations. At one o'clock on a moonlit night, Lord Irwin and Gandhi signed the treaty since famous as the 'Gandhi-Irwin Pact.' The Viceroy urged the half-naked fakir to pose for a joint photograph in celebration of the event, but Gandhi refused since he never poses before a camera.

out of one of His Majesty's prisons. He travels always in a third class compartment when on a railway train, and on deck when aboard a ship. He inaugurated his anti-touchability campaign by adopting an untouchable girl as his daughter. On his last visit to London in connection with his second Round Table Conference, he rejected Royal hospitality and put up with the poorest people of London in the East End, where he won the title of "Uncle Gandhi" from the poor children, who flocked around him during his early morning walks and evening prayers. Invited to Buckingham Palace as His Majesty's guest, he walked about in his loin cloth with as much detachment as he had shown as a guest in the untouchable quarters back in India. When he has to concentrate on writing, he does not retreat to a seashore cottage but observes a day of silence instead. These things make news, and there are many critics who see in them Gandhi's flair for the colourful and the histrionic. Some men go further and accuse Gandhi of deliberately exploiting the weaknesses of an abnormally religious people by doing what in other countries would have led him to the cross or the lunatic asylum. None, however, doubts the sincerity of his purpose, and it is agreed on all hands that the *Swaraj* movement owes its most to the Mahatma—a triple combination of saint, person of exquisite charm, and shrewd politician. Perhaps each great social movement in history owes its most to its respective *Charismatic* leader. Always on the threshold of godhood, Gandhi has however consistently and emphatically denied any divine

When the Viceroy offered a mild drink to his ascetic guest, Gandhi asked for a glass of water instead. Then from the folds of his loin cloth, he slyly pulled out a neat little package. In it was some of the contraband salt, which had just landed sixty thousand men and thirty thousand women in jail. Gandhi diluted a pinch of the salt in a glass of water extended to him and drank it. Thus Gandhi literally proved his salt and a roar of laughter from the Indian and the Briton cemented the Pact, which paved the way for the new constitution. Later Gandhi paid a call on Lady Irwin and astonished her to spare half an hour a day for his spinning wheel programme.

"Yet this unarmed little ninety pounds of humanity is terrifying at times. The mightiest empire of our day is appalled when he threatens to give the signal for one of his civil disobedience campaigns. He is more feared than a nation in arms. The writer personally remembers when some two hundred police headed by British Inspectors and a magistrate arrested him after two months of the Civil Disobedience Campaign of 1930. Evidently fearing the worst, they came in the dead of the night to remove the Mahatma while his country slept. Although the men and women with Gandhi shared his views on violence, the police watched them leerily. The Bombay Mail was halted in a jungle between two stations so that the prisoner could be put aboard without attracting attention. With his never failing poise, Gandhi asked the English Magistrate to read the warrant for his arrest. The Englishman trembled as he obeyed and his voice failed him twice. The inspectors squinted at their

power. Perhaps no one has a better chance of being accepted as a modern Buddha, a Christ or a Mohammad. But the so-called *Saint of Sabramati* has left no stone unturned in order to block the genesis of *Gandhism* which might easily find some two hundred million believers at the very onset. Here is a typical story of the man who refuses a halo inspite of unprecedented lures and possibilities—a story eye-witnessed by the author :—

In June, 1930, Gandhi and his so-called 'First Battalion' of civil resisters were camping in a microscopic village called Karadi in the Gujarat district. Gandhi was putting up in a bamboo hut, especially constructed for him in a mango grove. The salt movement was in full swing, and the entire nation was being directed from these unpretentious headquarters. One morning a group of villagers came to Gandhi's hut in a procession—women leading the little column with triumphant songs. A band of musicians in the rear was regulating the tempo of the march. The men were bearing fruits and flowers and bags of money. They approached Gandhi with piety and placed the offerings reverentially at his feet. "Our village well," faltered the spokesman of the delegation in answer to Gandhi's penetrating glance—"our village well was without water for these many years. Your sanctifying footprints touched our soil yesterday, and lo, to-day the well is full of water. We pray to Thee—." "You are fools!" was Gandhi's caustic interruption. "Beyond a doubt, it was a coincidence. I have no more

watches nervously while resting their free hands on their revolvers. But, unperturbed, Gandhi had eyes only for his people. Sitting there under the stars, he asked his saddened little band to give him his favourite music—the song of the Ideal man who is detached alike in bliss and sorrow. At the close of the chant, Gandhi stepped lightly into the patrol wagon, leaving a surprised inspector to follow him. We asked the Mahatma for a message to his wife. "She is a brave girl," he said, and with that they sped him away.

"This terrible meekness of Gandhi is often akin to a peculiar kind of arrogance—a psychic complex arising from his dead surety of purpose combined with his oriental fatalism and a living faith in the doctrine that truth triumphs eventually. In a way, Gandhi's self-confidence is a further manifestation of his revolutionary *charisma*—*a It is written—but I say unto you* type of phenomenon. At the time of the Karachi Congress, a band of communists demonstrated against him and tried to injure him physically. In an open meeting in the evening, attended by half a million people, he laughed at the incident and declared, if I remember his words correctly, "I keep no bodyguard to protect me. My chest is literally bare. Yet no one can kill me. For my bodyguard is no less a person than God Almighty." A few months later a bomb was thrown on his car in Poona. No serious damage was done. Immediately afterwards however, he announced that from then on, he would definitely not use an automobile so that future assassins would have fewer obstacles in their path. A bullock cart has been his official means of transportation ever since. Another incident came to me from

influence with God than you have." Then the severe expression in Gandhi's face gave way to a fatherly smile, he patiently began to explain away the mystery, using pomey analogies which could be understood by these illiterate villagers :—" Suppose a crow sits on a palm tree at the moment when the tree falls to the ground ! Would you think that the weight of the bird caused the tree's proooting ? Go back !", commanded the tiny man on a palm leaf matress, " and instead of thinking about such silly accidents, utilize your time in spinning and weaving cloth to clothe Mother India."

Gandhi whose career owes much to miraculous accidents, thus denies himself the most supreme accident that can ever happen to a mortal—that of becoming " Son of God, of being the founder of a new faith."

THE END

a revered teacher, who was a prison companion of Gandhi in the Yeravda Central Jail. Once he begged Gandhi to take more food and to be more careful about his health. And here is Gandhi's reply, reported in my friend's language, "I am taking good care of body. I feel as responsible as a pregnant woman. God in His infinite mercy has chosen, it seems to me, that I be instrumental in bringing forth India's freedom. I therefore cannot afford to die as yet."

"A gift for the 'personal touch', which has brought to Gandhi so many notable victories in public affairs, is but an extension of his mannerisms in private life. For one thing, Gandhi never forgets a face or a name, a quality often associated in America with President Roosevelt and James A. Farley. The doors of his hut, a moving workshop, which travels from Kashmir to Cape Comorin, and from Bombay to Burma, are always open to all sorts of visitors. Any tongue-tied villager can see him, even at midnight, after the tradition of India's past great Emperor Jahangir. The pressure of work compels him to receive foreign correspondents while taking his austere meals or even while lying in his bath. He generally sleeps four hours out of the twenty-four, perhaps to-day in a speeding train and to-morrow in a jiggling automobile *en route* from village to village. The writer distinctly remembers seeing him one morning early in 1930, blot his signature on the second ultimatum to the Viceroy with one flourish of his hand, and with the next a letter to an untouchable girl of ten in his retreat, five hundred miles away, inquiring whether she had applied iodine to her smashed finger. During his second sojourn in the Yeravda Jail, he used to

write a hundred and six letters weekly on the blank corners of newspapers to the inmates of his Ashrama, and this correspondence was over and above his usual mountainous daily mail. He resorted to newspapers because it hurt him to use the prison stationery which was supplied at the expense of the poor Indian tax-payer.

"Gandhi's 'personal touch' can be a shade ironic, particularly with his nearest and dearest. This genial and humane friend of the people at large is the most exacting of task-masters when he deals with those who are closest to him. Any member of Gandhi's intimate circle will tell you that in order to have the privilege of living with him, a man or a woman must be prepared to sink with him into a veritable ocean of self-sacrifice. One of them was overheard to say that dancing on the edge of a sword was easy compared to winning the Mahatma's individual approbation. Gandhi never allows anybody to do any menial labour solely for him. But the individual who is entrusted with his simple garments is apt to be publicly rebuked if they are not sent back in good repair and immaculate. One of the rules of his Co-operative Retreat is that no member can have personal belongings. Once his wife, mother to the multitudes of India, innocently hoarded a huge sum of twenty five rupees for what seemed to be a worthy purpose. When Gandhi came to know about it, he exposed his wife in a long article published in his weekly *Young India* under the title "My shame, my sorrow," and went on a three days' fast! A story which gives further proof of Gandhi's exactions upon those he loves reaches us while this is being written. It concerns one Sardar Prithvisingh, a so-called terrorist,